WGI 2026 PERCUSSION

ADJUDICATION MANUAL & RULEBOOK

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OUR MISSION

The mission of WGI Sport of the Arts is to inspire and educate young performers around the world through unparalleled competitions and events with the spirit of inclusion, personal development, and community.

OUR PURPOSE

WGI Sport of the Arts organizes high-energy and enjoyable events and experiences for color guard, percussion and winds groups at the highest standard worldwide.

OUR VALUES

Excellence and driving our participants and designers to achieve the highest performance standards

Teamwork and collaboration with a positive and open attitude towards new ideas

Honesty and transparency as essential in everything we do

Inclusivity for all participants and stakeholders, regardless of race, ethnicity, disability, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation

Creativity and driving our participants and designers to achieve the highest artistic standards

Safety and protection for all participants and stakeholders

CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct applies to everyone involved with WGI, including all participants, minor participants, groups, adult supervisors, WGI personnel, volunteers, contractors, and Circuit Partners. Everyone must follow this Code of Conduct to stay in good standing with WGI. The policies in this Code of Conduct aim to ensure safe environments and experiences during all WGI activities.

This Code of Conduct explains what behavior is appropriate or inappropriate. While it cannot cover every possible situation, everyone must follow the letter and spirit of these guidelines to stay in good standing with WGI.

Definitions of Parties

- **Participant:** An individual over 18 performing with a group.
- **Minor Participant:** An individual under 18 performing with a group.
- **Group:** The entire organization or an individual participating group.
- **Adult Supervisor:** An individual in a managerial, instructional, design, or volunteer role spending two or more hours in-person with participants.
- **Volunteer:** An individual who freely gives their time to WGI or a group and provides support in any capacity.
- **Contractor:** An individual who provides occasional services for a fee.
- **Circuit Partner:** A regional partner organization that hosts marching arts events, using shared resources licensed by WGI and has its own governing body and financial management.

WGI will not tolerate conduct that violates its policies. Even if an action was not intended to violate this Code of Conduct, WGI prioritizes the actual impact of the action over the person's intentions to prevent negative experiences.

In addition to upholding this Code of Conduct, WGI can review and may take interim action against anyone involved in or accused of unlawful activities related to their participation in WGI or the marching arts.

All parties should consider themselves ambassadors of WGI. They are expected to uphold these policies, remind others of them when necessary, and report alleged violations.

Alcohol & Drug Policy

WGI parties have the right to participate in an environment free of alcohol, drugs, and other substances. Prohibited substances include narcotics, marijuana, products containing THC, inhalant drugs, and over-the-counter medications unless used with a valid medical prescription. Violations include, but are not limited to:

- Distributing alcohol and prohibited substances to any participant.

- Consuming or being under the influence of alcohol or a prohibited substance while under a participating group's supervision or providing services to WGI in connection with any event or activity, including rehearsals.
- Possessing or distributing alcohol or a prohibited substance on school grounds or arena facilities where such activities are prohibited.

Exceptions to this policy may be made on a case-by-case basis by WGI to allow alcohol at specifically sanctioned WGI events. At such allowable events, local regulations are expected to be followed. Prohibited substances remain forbidden at all times.

Anti-Retaliation, Whistleblower, and False Reporting Policy
WGI will not tolerate retaliation against any party who makes a good faith report or threatens to make a good faith report. Retaliatory actions include threatening, intimidating, harassing, coercing, or any other action that could dissuade someone from reporting misconduct. Retaliation does not include good-faith actions lawfully pursued in response to a reported violation.

Any participant knowingly making a false allegation will be subject to disciplinary action. A false allegation differs from an unsubstantiated allegation, which means there is insufficient evidence to determine whether an allegation is true or false. An unsubstantiated allegation alone is not grounds for a Code violation.

Bullying Policy
Bullying means severe behavior directed at a participant that is aggressive and likely to hurt, control, or diminish the participant emotionally or physically often centering around a real or perceived power imbalanced. Examples of bullying include repeated physical, verbal, or social abuse. Physical abuse may refer to hitting, pushing, beating, biting, or other offensive contact. Verbal abuse may refer to ridiculing, taunting, name-calling, intimidating, or threatening to cause harm. Social abuse may refer to using rumors or false statements to diminish someone's reputation or socially excluding someone and asking others to do the same. Bullying may occur in person or virtually through any social or electronic mediums.

Bullying does not include occasional instances of rude or mean-spirited language, conduct arising from a conflict or struggle between persons with incompatible views or positions, or professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improved participant performance.

Confidential Reporting
Reports are made confidentially to WGI. Confidentiality means WGI will know the reporter's identity but will not share it unless consent is provided or if WGI is legally required to do so. Inaccurate or withheld information will limit WGI's ability to conduct an inquiry and respond.

Fraternization Policy
WGI maintains a strong position on fraternization between all parties. Fraternization means any close personal relationship that goes beyond a professional working relationship and can include romantic or intimate relationships, excessive socializing, and favoritism. Examples include:

- Sexual or romantic relationships between adult supervisors/volunteers and minor participants are prohibited.
- Establishing a new sexual or romantic relationship between adult supervisors/volunteers and adult participants while working with the same group is prohibited. Additionally, establishing a new sexual or romantic relationship been any party where there is, or a perceived power imbalance is strongly discouraged.
- Fraternization between participants and minor participants is strongly discouraged.
- Already-existing relationships between adult supervisors and participants are not encouraged but are not forbidden. These relationships must be managed to address potential conflicts or power imbalances.
- Any relationship that puts any party at risk of harm is prohibited.

General Conduct Policy

The experience of each party and the reputation of WGI depends on the conduct of all parties involved. Good manners, basic decency, and common sense are generally all that is required to ensure appropriate conduct and behavior. Engaging in conduct or using language that could be perceived as rude, inappropriate, abusive, disorderly, derogatory, immoral, or threatening will not be tolerated. Violations of this policy include, but are not limited to:

- Applying undue and unfair pressure to another party, especially if one party has authority over another.
- Verbally abusing any WGI staff.
- Inappropriate conduct on the contest floor, rehearsal sites, or event venues.
- Disruptive or rude behavior anywhere, anytime during a WGI activity.
- Affiliates of a group, such as parents or spectators, engaging in inappropriate conduct directed at any party on the contest floor, rehearsal sites, or event venues.

Harassment Policy

All parties must maintain a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment. Harassment means repeated or severe conduct that causes fear, humiliation, or annoyance and reflects discriminatory bias to establish dominance, superiority, or power over an individual or group based on age, race, ethnicity, gender, orientation, culture, religion, national origin, mental or physical disability. Harassment also refers to conduct that creates a hostile environment. A hostile environment exists when the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to interfere with, limit, or deprive any individual of the opportunity to participate in any program or activity. Harassment may occur in person or virtually through any social or electronic medium.

Harassment does not include occasional instances of rude or mean-spirited language, conduct arising from a conflict or struggle between persons with incompatible views or positions, or professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline, or improved participant performance.

Hazing Policy

Hazing means any conduct that subjects another person to anything that may endanger, abuse, humiliate, degrade, or intimidate them as a condition of joining or being socially accepted by a group, team, or organization. Consent by the person subjected to hazing is not a defense, regardless of their perceived willingness to cooperate or participate.

Hostile Rehearsal Environment Policy

The rehearsal space is where groups develop creative routines and foster teamwork. A rehearsal environment is defined as periods when the group is practicing under the direct supervision of an authority figure or coordinator. It is a violation of this Code for any party to engage in severe or pervasive conduct that hampers a party's ability to participate meaningfully in the rehearsal environment. Rehearsal environments should remain educational both in the planning and commentary provided to any party. When rehearsal techniques and feedback are no longer educational, a hostile rehearsal environment could be created. Conduct prohibited by this Code, such as harassment, hazing, and bullying, is also prohibited in the rehearsal environment. Additionally, violations of this policy include:

- Creating a rehearsal environment intended to make any party excessively afraid, nervous, or anxious regardless of intention. This does not include professionally accepted coaching methods.
- Withholding educational information to achieve skills safely
- Attacking the personal character of participants rather than aspects of their performance.
- Rehearsing for extended timeframes while withholding, recommending against, or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention, or sleep.

Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated. Offenses include sexual or gender-related harassment, nonconsensual sexual contact, exposing a minor to sexual content/imagery, and sexual exploitation.

- **Sexual or Gender-related Harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, unwanted and continued sexual flirtations, and propositions. It also includes sexually degrading words and other conduct of a sexual nature.
- **Nonconsensual Sexual Contact:** Engaging in sexual contact without consent.
- **Exposing a Minor to Sexual Content/Imagery:** Intentionally exposing a minor to sexually explicit imagery.
- **Sexual Exploitation:** Taking non-consensual or abusive sexual advantage of another for one's own advantage.

Reporting Instances of Sexual Misconduct

If any party receives information suggesting sexual misconduct has occurred, they must report it to WGI immediately. Groups and Circuit Partners should report allegations of sexual misconduct to law enforcement. They must maintain effective policies and procedures for the protection and safety of all parties, including the ability to report suspected sexual misconduct without retaliation.

If any party learns of or suspects child abuse, including sexual misconduct, they must immediately report it to law enforcement, WGI, and comply with other applicable reporting requirements. Reporting to WGI alone is not sufficient.

Social Networking Policy

WGI values the freedom of expression on social networking sites and does not wish to discourage self-publishing or self-expression. However, we expect all parties involved in any capacity in WGI to follow the applicable guidelines and policies. It is important to understand that any posts made on

social media are personal and do not represent WGI. Our policy prohibits the use of social media to post or display comments that are vulgar, obscene, threatening, intimidating, harassing, or hostile on account of any protected characteristic under applicable law on platforms controlled by WGI.

Weapons Policy

To ensure a safe environment for everyone, WGI strictly prohibits the wearing, carrying, storing, or possession of firearms or other dangerous weapons at any of our events or event venues. Anyone found violating this policy will be immediately removed and barred from future WGI events. Additionally, if the violator is a participant, adult supervisor, or volunteer affiliated with a participating group, that group will be disqualified and asked to leave the venue.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST (AFFILIATIONS)

Any individual employed or engaged by WGI is expected to always work in the organization's best interests, as a disinterested and reasonable observer would view that interest in the circumstances. Impartiality and the perception of impartiality are critical to our success.

A conflict of interest exists when any action is contrary to or interferes with the impartiality or the perception of impartiality. A conflict of interest may be real, potential, or perceived. Accordingly, any person employed or engaged by WGI must avoid and disclose all conflicts between the best interest of the organization and their own personal interests or personal relationships.

A conflict of interest also exists whenever a person may personally benefit, either directly or indirectly, financially or otherwise, from their position in the organization.

All actual and potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed promptly, and it is the individual's responsibility to comply with this requirement each time a new conflict of interest occurs or if any initial disclosure no longer accurately reflects the nature of the conflict of interest. In most cases, disclosure may be all that is required. If WGI determines that an actual conflict of interest exists, it will determine what additional actions are necessary to remedy it.

It is impossible to describe every potential conflict of interest. Most conflicts of interest will deal with adjudication but could also exist in other situations. However, to assist in understanding and complying with this policy, an illustrative, but not all-inclusive, list of actual conflicts of interest follows:

- Is a designer, instructor, manager, or administrator of a group competing at WGI events.
- Has a family member, spouse, or significant other employed or engaged with a group competing at WGI events.
- Receives compensation from a school music department or organization that sponsors a competing group (i.e., an individual who teaches music in the school when the music department sponsors a group)
- Gives an in-person consultation to a group in the current year. Online consultations sanctioned by WGI are allowed.
- Displays a group's logo while at a WGI event.
- Operates a business venture, does business for, or is retained by a third party for services that conflict with WGI. Employees, contractors, and volunteers may not use the intellectual property of WGI (i.e., logo, judging systems, proprietary and non-public training materials) for personal financial benefit.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCORING SYSTEM

This system is a means to encourage and reward new standards of creativity, artistry, and excellence in design and performance while providing a vehicle that will educate beginners in such a way that they will grow to understand and evolve to the greatest level of their potential.

It is our intent that this system will encourage and reward innovation and acknowledge the tasteful and aesthetic appeal of good design through quality composition.

The system acknowledges the joint efforts of designers, instructors, and participants through understanding that excellence and artistry are displayed through the design; and that those same designs are recognized and credited through the artistry of performance.

This system utilizes a method of subjective evaluation that rewards the achievement of positive qualities and offers continued encouragement to strive for greater achievement. This is a positive system, rewarding successful efforts at every level, and is designed to encourage groups to develop, maintain, and project their own styles. We therefore emphasize creativity, originality, taste, and excellence.

Growth and innovation are to be rewarded and must be achieved with quality to receive a maximum score.

The numerical score reflects the successful achievement of the current contest. Scoring can fluctuate week to week, day to day, and judge to judge based on performance qualities, depth of composition, and other contest dynamic considerations.

PHILOSOPHY OF JUDGING

TEACHER - COUNSELOR – CRITIC

We as judges are extremely close to the groups we adjudicate, especially at a local level. We share in their growth, and we take on the responsibility of giving them input for improvement. Sometimes we talk directly to the participants and try to help them understand what is being asked of them. Unlike athletic referees or umpires, unlike other international championships judges, we are not isolated from the competitors we grade. This fact urges us to take a long hard look at why we are judges.

In most cases we have come from this activity; it has given something tremendously important to us. Most of us have been participants or instructors. Some of us have felt the stinging indifference of a judge who didn't seem to care, and we have vowed never to be like that. Others have felt the nurturing of some special person who went just a little beyond his/her duty and helped us to grow.

In any event, we are all basically motivated to give something back to an activity that is special to us. In addition, we have a strong feeling for the participants. We share a common delight in watching them grow and develop into something special. And so, we come to that credo which becomes our philosophy of judging.

Clinics, seminars, and proper study can teach the judge how to rate and rank. Examinations can determine technical skills, but there are other qualities that are just as important. Communication skills are essential. We communicate to the groups in everything we do- the performance evaluation, the critique, and just casual conversations, all of which carry a need for well-developed communication skills. Judges must be professionals who do not employ sarcastic or rude dialogue to those whom they are adjudicating. Hurtful commentary is unnecessary and unacceptable. To convey boredom or indifference is unacceptable. Tone of voice is of paramount importance.

Beginning groups with young inexperienced instructors require us to be "Teachers". With groups at this level we will find many times when our evaluation will be clinics in basic technique. This must be done with patience, setting a logical progression of development for them to follow.

We must offer encouragement when they are confused (which could be most of the time) and enthusiasm when they show some level of success. Remember that these beginners are where many of us were some ten or fifteen years ago. Deal with them in basic terms. Without encouragement and enthusiasm for their minor successes, growth could be impaired. The nurturing process at this level is of vital importance.

At the second level, we deal with groups that have been around for a few years, felt some success and believe that they are ready to move to a higher classification. Here we find ourselves dealing with the adolescent of our activity - convinced of their expertise and often reluctant to accept the fact that they have anything to learn. At this point we find ourselves in the role of "Counselor". This role requires the most patience, the strongest concern, and the greatest amount of effort.

Finally, the student really does grow up and we see moments of brilliance emerge from his/her creations. One day they have it all together, and in terms of creation, have surpassed the teacher, outgrown the counselor, and look to us to be the art critic. At this point, we must challenge and encourage them to set even higher goals and standards. We must be professional, concerned, and supportive.

The beginning judge should not enter the arena expecting to be all of these things at once. Our idiom is consistent in its attitude about rookies. Your first year in judging will be just like your first year performing. There will be a thousand tests - technical, personal, emotional, and intellectual. You will be expected to endure them all. You are there because you are bright, willing, and you care a great deal.

Align your involvement with the young beginning groups. Grow with them; be their teacher today so that in a year or so you can be their counselor and one day attain the level of critic as they emerge, just as you will emerge, fulfilling your goals and standards.

Superior participants always give more than 100%. Superior judges also give more than 100%. As judges, our disciplines and attitudes must be an extension of those the participants follow. We expect them to be professional, so we must be professional. We expect them to respect us, so we must respect them. Demand no less of yourself than is demanded of each performer. A great teacher continually learns from his/her students; a great judge continually learns from the instructors. Communication is a two-way street. Good groups and judges grow together by helping one another, by keeping communication lines open, and by setting mutual goals and standards for the activity.

Judge with your head, with your heart, and in a positive, nurturing, and challenging manner as you contribute to the growth and development of this unique activity and its very special participants!

THE WGI JUDGING SYSTEM

1. All participants and all program styles start with an equal opportunity to succeed.
2. Scores are assigned based upon criteria expectations within each sub-caption. In marching classes, the Music and the Effect-Music captions account for 30% each. The Visual and Effect-Visual captions account for 20% each, the sum of which will determine the score and placement of each group. In Concert classes, Music and Effect each account for 50% of the score. The sum will determine the score and placement of each group.
3. The Effect-Music, Effect-Visual, and concert Effect sheets will credit all those elements that combine to display the Group's effectiveness.
4. The Music sheets will credit the designer's efforts and the performer's achievement based upon the musical, rhythmic, and physical (marching class only) content of the composition.
5. The Visual sheet credits the composition and orchestration of the design, and the achievement of technical and expressive excellence.
6. The adjudication system requires that rating and ranking be done on a sub-caption basis so that each sub-caption number is a rating and ranking in and of itself. In this manner, groups receive a profiling of their strengths and weaknesses. When the totals of the sub-caption indicate a tie in the overall sheet, the judge should re-evaluate his/her sub-caption numbers to see if the tie can be broken.
7. A maximum score in any sub-caption is possible during the adjustment phase of a judge's application of the adjudication system, prior to the scores being locked. This may occur due to upward pressure on scores based on the contest dynamic.
8. Standards within the application of the criteria reference are not the same in both Scholastic and Independent Classes. A score applied to a scholastic Group should not have relativity, in terms of range, to an independent Group at the same level of development.
9. The five categories specify levels of achievement for each sub-caption. The numerical rating of each performance falls within the category that best describes the level of achievement MOST OF THE TIME. A judge's application of Impression, Analysis, and Comparison will further define where in each category a score will be assigned. The approach will be consistent in each of the five categories or boxes.
10. Total assessment will be from obvious start to obvious conclusion of the performance.

THE MULTI-TIERED SCORING SYSTEM

The multi-tiered scoring system is a detailed, specific system that focuses on and rewards the development of the separate classes or paradigms. It is based on a curriculum specifically reflecting the growth involved within each class.

- It provides opportunity for participants to complete a process of development described in their specific class curriculum.
- It allows groups to be rated accurately.
- It allows all classes to experience a higher numerical grade for achievement.

THE FIVE STEPS IN LEARNING:

Our developmental criteria are based on a 5-step model outlining the steps involved in the learning process. This theory is an educational premise and describes the process of understanding and finally performing any skill. These steps are:

Step 1 (Box 1) EXPERIENCE - Material is introduced to the student. The concept is presented with the principle/theory behind it.

Step 2 (Box 2) DISCOVER - The student attempts to convey the material to physical application and discovers his/her capabilities and what must be done to improve. The student practices the skill.

Step 3 (Box 3) KNOW - The student knows what is expected, grasps the material presented, and is becoming skilled in its application.

Step 4 (Box 4) UNDERSTAND - The student has a solid grasp of the material and can demonstrate the skills with good proficiency.

Step 5 (Box 5) APPLY - The skills are fully absorbed and easily applied. This premise directs the judge to recognize BEGINNING, INTERMEDIATE, AND ADVANCED maturity. In this way, participants and instructors can plan their programs with a natural development and progression in mind. They can be graded much as they would in school, and the system provides both curriculum and achievement recognition through score.

The following is a chart that defines the progression of the curriculum.

A CLASS:

Box 1: The student EXPERIENCES basic skills.

Box 2: The student DISCOVERS basic skills. The show may be incomplete at this level.

Box 3: The student KNOWS basic skills. The show is a developing work in progress.

Box 4: The student UNDERSTANDS basic skills. DISCOVERS & KNOWS some intermediate skills.

Box 5: The student APPLIES basic skills and KNOWS some intermediate skills.

OPEN CLASS:

Box 1: The student EXPERIENCES intermediate skills. The Group might be misclassified.

Box 2: The student DISCOVERS intermediate skills. The show may be incomplete at this level.

Box 3: The student KNOWS intermediate skills. The show is a developing work in progress.

Box 4: The student UNDERSTANDS intermediate skills, DISCOVERS AND KNOWS some advanced skills.

Box 5: The student APPLIES intermediate skills and KNOWS some advanced skills.

WORLD CLASS:

Box 1: The performer EXPERIENCES advanced skills. The Group might be misclassified.

Box 2: The performer DISCOVERS advanced skills. Shows may be incomplete at this level.

Box 3: The performer KNOWS advanced skills. The show is a developing work in progress.

Box 4: The performer UNDERSTANDS advanced skills.

Box 5: The performer APPLIES advanced skills.

Each of the criteria reference boxes will reinforce the curriculum and the level of development of the student as referenced in the above chart. The criteria will then offer more detailed delineated descriptions. When referring to beginning, intermediate, and advanced skills or design qualities, it is understood that these are based on those principles set forth in this adjudication manual. Judges and instructors are directed to refer to this source when considering the three levels described.

EXPECTATIONS FROM THE MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM

- This system is designed to afford the judge the opportunity to rate and rank the groups within the sub-captions, profiling for them a clear picture of their strengths and weakness. This will produce a scoring picture that may be different from the compressed scores from the past. Box ties should be drastically reduced because there will be room to indicate each Group's achievement within the sub-caption.
- This system will allow the groups to see the growth they may achieve over the course of the season because there will be adequate numbers available for this process to be reflected.
- Groups will have the opportunity to reach maximum scores in every class because the system is designed specifically for this potential to occur.
- The expanded range of numbers requires adjudicators to exercise care in the rating process. This system is not designed to create inordinate spreads. It is intended to permit proper sub-caption rating, ranking, and profiling. In all cases, spreads should be a true and accurate reflection of the degree of separation between competitive groups.
- Scores given to an A Class Group are not comparable to scores given to groups in the Open or World Classes. Scores given to an Open Class Group are not comparable to scores given to groups in the A or World Classes.
- Historically, when we utilize a national linear scale, all classes of groups would look at their score relative to all other classes. This class comparison is no longer appropriate. Judges and groups should measure each program, and each performance based upon how closely the group came to reaching the maximum score within that specific class. A and Open groups now have a method to determine where they are on the learning scale and how close they are to maximizing expectations for their class.
- The important issues here deal with guiding each group through a step-by-step process in their growth and development, moving into the next class when all of the training and skills have been established.

CLASSIFICATION

It is extremely important for all groups to place themselves in the proper class. This is of particular concern in local circuits where some competing groups are regrouped for the purpose of having a balanced number of groups in each of their local classes.

Groups should make every effort to compete in the class for which they are best suited. Groups that may be competing in the wrong class could find that the evaluative process lacks applicability and utility in their developmental growth because the adjudicative criteria are informed by the class curriculum.

- All A and Open Class groups participating in WGI events will be evaluated for appropriate classification throughout the season.
- All groups participating in WGI World Championships are required to send a performance video to the Percussion Administrators for review.
- If at least two-thirds of the Percussion Administrators determine that a group should be further evaluated for appropriate classification, the group's performance video will be sent to the full Percussion Steering Committee for review.
- To trigger a reclassification to a new class, a supermajority vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the Percussion Steering Committee will be required. Potential reclassifications that do not receive at least two-thirds of the vote will fail, even if receiving a majority vote for reclassification.
- The Director of Percussion will notify any misclassified groups of their reclassification.
- If a group is determined to be misclassified at a WGI Regional event, they may be reclassified by the Percussion Administrator or Chief Judge between Prelims and Finals.
    - If a potentially misclassified group at a Regional is also attending World Championships, they may opt to voluntarily change classes between Prelims and Finals or may choose to wait for their Percussion Steering Committee evaluation.
        - WGI reserves the right to involuntarily reclassify a significantly misclassified group between Prelims and Finals upon the unanimous recommendation of the entire adjudication panel and the Percussion Administrator / Chief Judge on-site.
    - If a potentially misclassified group at a Regional is not attending World Championships, they may be reclassified on-site by the Percussion Administrator or Chief judge.
- Reclassifications may occur at any point in the season, up to and including World Championships.
- If a group is advised to move down a class, it will be at the discretion of the group director to make the advised move.

A GUIDE TO JUDGING A CLASS PERCUSSION GROUPS

A Class groups are a unique and special branch of the WGI family. These are the younger or less developed participants. Our goal is to assist in their training and development and to reward these achievements in a logical learning progression. To teach these groups with the greatest degree of consistency and success requires a thorough understanding of their level of development and training.

SCHOLASTIC A CLASS is consistently aged 13 through 18. Like most high school students, the group's show a tendency to be similar to one another. Their choice of instrumentation, the formatting of their shows, and the depth of their training and skills are comparable in many cases.

INDEPENDENT A CLASS Groups use the same criteria as the Scholastic A Class with the exception of the age limit. Here is where the beginning student discovers the joy of performing and realizes the sense of achievement as each skill is learned.

A GUIDE TO JUDGING OPEN CLASS PERCUSSION GROUPS

Open Class groups are an exciting branch of the WGI Percussion family. They are enthusiastic with a strong desire to grow and explore. They are open and eager to test their skills in a more challenging arena. Most will have achieved the level of training set in A Class and welcome the challenge of greater creativity. There should be sound development in a logical growing progression of challenges while maintaining the premise that growth requires new and additional training.

The Open Class is where the intermediate student explores new challenge through performance and realizes a greater sense of achievement as each more complex skill is learned. They experience a freedom in their process as creativity takes on a greater importance in their development. There may be a tendency to OVERWRITE in this growing stage. They should maintain strong standards of excellence in these important developing years.

SCHOLASTIC OPEN CLASS is consistently aged 13 through 18. Unlike Scholastic A Class, these groups have discovered a much stronger personality and are not usually similar to one another. The depth of their training and skills are still comparable in many cases, primarily due to the similarity of their age and the similar number of hours put into their development. Their programs are often freshly unique and original.

INDEPENDENT OPEN CLASS still contains a wide range of age and some skill difference. Participants within one Group can range from 12 to 22 years of age. There is greater consistency in the range of skills and physical development. Programs are unique. A few individuals will demonstrate a high level of skills. Some advanced challenges will exist.

A GUIDE TO JUDGING WORLD CLASS PERCUSSION GROUPS

World Class groups are the standard-setting branch of the WGI Percussion family. These are the innovators of indoor percussion who set the direction of the activity through the standards of creative design and performance achievements. They explore new challenges of dexterity, musical, and physical skill within original and unique programs. They are comfortable dealing with abstraction and are strongly influenced by the Arts. Their exploration is the highest level of creative potential. They

expect judges to understand and support their creative efforts and be able to make discerning separations between their achievements and those of their competitors. The adjudication within those "works in progress" is more likened to the response of the art or food critic. Judges must have a highly developed sense of all musical and visual techniques as well as design and creative standards.

Our goal is to assist in the fulfillment of their potential and to reward their achievements in a discerning manner, maintaining the premise that those advanced skills require new and sophisticated training. To judge these groups with the greatest consistency and success requires a thorough understanding of their goals.

Here is where the advanced student explores the optimum challenge through widely varied performance techniques, while understanding fully the joy of performance communication and the victory of audience involvement. Those individuals privileged to judge this class are entrusted to recognize, support, and reward the standards and challenges demonstrated within this class while upholding strong standards of excellence.

SCHOLASTIC WORLD CLASS is consistently aged 13 through 18 because of the make-up of the high school arena. Often this class will consist of upperclassmen. Unlike the Independent World Class, these participants are rarely over 18 years of age. The groups have strongly defined personalities and are highly creative and unique. They explore innovative program concepts. The depth of their training and skills is strong.

INDEPENDENT WORLD CLASS participants demonstrate a high degree of musical and physical development. They are very experienced and fully trained. Programs are unique and innovative, and these components are important at this level. Some very sophisticated challenges will be placed on the participants.

When judging this class, the judge becomes the "critic" and should respect the knowledge of the instructors and designers. Dialogs should be a learning exchange between instructor and judge.

ACCOUNTABILITY

To be answerable for all choices and decisions

- All judges, both local and international, are reminded that they are to be accountable to every competitive group, every performer, the system, and the philosophy. Judging decisions must be accountable to the tenets of the caption.
- Instructors must be accountable to their members, their understanding of how the competitive philosophy will impact their choices, and to the audiences who will view their programs. Accountability will be the basis upon which we will address competition & scoring.

COMPETITION IS A TEST OF SKILL

Our first measure of accountability is to the premise of competition. The nature of a competition demands that judges recognize, reward, and compare all of the qualities that separate competitors. This process will produce a comparative rating which will subsequently rank each competitor.

ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH SCORING

Application of a score is one of the most significantly accountable representations of how the judge values each Group within a contest.

- All judges must share a consistent, collective understanding and application of the philosophy.
- Judges must be independent in arriving at their scores and avoid the tendency to assign numbers based on prior scores for no other reason than insecurity or "safety". However, the concept of "independent judging" may not become an excuse for unaccountable decisions.
- Judges should expect to be held accountable for every score assigned and be able to support that score with valid discussion relative to the rating and ranking of each group.
- Judges must feel confident to make difficult but accurate calls which sometimes might not be popular. They must feel confident assigning scores that they believe are accurate in spite of what other judges may have done. When a score is correctly given based on the criteria, the judges must be confident that their decision will be supported.
- Judges must "judge" each contest as a new event, carrying NO PRECONCEIVED OPINIONS into the actual competition.
- Judges can only judge what is presented; they cannot judge what is not presented. Speculation or expectation of what the judge thinks "should or could be in the show" should be left for critique elaboration and not affect the score assigned.
- Judges should consider all aspects of a program/composition/vocabulary "within the context of the whole" not in isolation. Their final assessment will be cumulative in nature.

ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH NUMBERS MANAGEMENT

Every judge has the responsibility to rate and to rank each group within each of the sub-captions on the score sheet. This involves providing numerical information to the Group, telling them where they are in the competitive field relative to other groups as well as where they are achieving on the development curve. Each sub-caption must provide this information if the judge is to do the best, most accurate job of scoring within his/her caption.

- All groups must be considered equally.

- A judge who applies ties in sub-captions must understand that this tells the instructors that the two groups are equal. This also suggests that either the judge did not give due thought to the "comparison" process of scoring, or that the judge's management of numbers failed to allow scoring room for the proper ranking of all groups within each sub-caption. The latitude provided by the Adjustment phase and the use of .5% in assigning a number should ensure the absence of ties.

- Scores should offer all groups a true barometer of the success of their process in each sub-caption.
- Scores should always accurately reflect the degree of quality and achievement of each group, at every point in the season.
- Scores should never be elevated just because it is the end of the year.
- Box 5 scores must be earned. It is not appropriate to assign them if standards are not fulfilled within the criteria.
- The Criteria Reference is always the basis upon which scores are assigned. Accountability to the criteria is mandatory.
- Inaccurate spreads within any contest will impair the judge's ability to consider all groups fully for proper ranking in each sub-caption.
- Spreads can be neither restricted nor assigned with abandon. If a spread is deserved, it must be made. ALL CAPTIONS must understand this and apply this premise alike. Scores should never be contrived. The important aspect here is that the spread is a true reflection of the rating for each Group, and that all captions apply this premise alike.

APPLICATION OF THE ADJUDICATION SYSTEM

1. It is the intent of this system that a number grade is assigned from whichever level of achievement describes the Group's qualities most of the time. The approach to arriving at and assigning a score will be consistent across all five boxes.

2. The criteria reference system describes five levels of achievement, which are applied to Impression, Analysis, and Comparison. These levels of achievement are described specifically in the section, "SCORING SYSTEM."

3. Impression is best described as the judge's subjective reaction. Numerically, the function of the impression is to determine a category for any particular sub-caption. The criteria reference system attempts to standardize this process. Analysis is the objective aspect of the evaluation that seeks out reasons to support or modify initial impressions. Numerically the analysis converts the impression category to a specific score within each sub-caption. Comparison requires the judge to look at the number given and compare it to other marks he/she has given in that sub-caption not only in that contest but also in earlier contests. Thus, when a judge assigns a number to an aspect of the Group's program, he/she is telling that Group how it stands on a national level.

4. In order to provide uniform numerical treatment for subjective judging, judges convert subjective impression into a numerical category and ultimately refine that category to a specific score.

5. Throughout the number assignment process, judges will be able to adjust previously assigned numbers to more accurately reflect spread considerations within the contest dynamic.

RATING AND PROPER SPREADS

The foundation of our judging process has always embraced the combined application of BOTH rating and ranking each group in the context of a competition and through criteria-based reference. While spreads have historically been a source of concern, it must be understood that in the accurate process of "rating" each group, often separations will exist between two groups and it is the judge's obligation to provide this numerical comparison. From the onset, these separations must be accurately indicated through scoring.

Judges must be prepared to offer this scoring information, and instructors must realize how valuable this information can be to them in their overall seasonal development. Together with this kind of scoring directive, there must be accountability on the part of the judge, offering the instructional staff of each group a clear understanding of what prompted each score (Performance dialogue and critique accountability).

Groups want to believe that scores received even at the local level are an accurate reflection of their achievement at that time. They hope to build on this score in their developmental process. If scores are inaccurately compressed, suggesting that a group is within a percentage or two of another group, and this rating fails to hold up in subsequent contests with other competitors, then the group loses confidence in the scoring process and might even make choices that could impede their development based on this inaccurate information.

SPREAD GUIDELINE

The chart below is used by the judge as a guideline for spreads.

Sub - Caption	Percentage Points
Very comparable	1% to 2%
Minor differences	3% to 4%
Definitive differences	5% to 7%
Significant differences	8% & Up

ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH PROFILING - Sub-caption Integrity

This technique can only mature when judges are disciplined in the rating process, the understanding of the meaning of a number, and the application of correct spreads. Proper scoring STARTS through rating and ranking within the sub-captions. It is this process that leads to the bottom-line score, and then takes the judge to the consideration of comparisons.

Judges must expand the latitude (range) of each sub-caption score and understand that they can assign a Performance Quality or Fulfillment score several percentage points below or above the vocabulary, composition, or repertoire mark in profiling the strengths and weaknesses. When this is done consistently and properly, the accountability within each sub-caption ranks groups fairly and accurately not only in each sub-caption, but also in an accurate overall rating. This latitude and emphasis on sub-caption integrity (profiling on each sheet, ranking within each sub-caption) must be applied equally in all captions.

ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH SAMPLING

All sheets need to be sampled equally between the 'what' and the 'how'. Both Effect sheets must sample the 'what' and the 'how' simultaneously without the traditional sub-caption scoring distinction. Judges' observations at all points in the season should be 50% designer and 50% performer. Every viewing is virtually a first viewing due to limited exposure, ongoing changes in the program, and development of performance skills. Every contest is a "new contest" with a new and unique set of dynamics. All achievement should be seen through "*what the performer is being asked to do."* What and how exist simultaneously; observations should include both elements as they occur.

ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH CRITIQUE DIALOGUE

Accountability by the judge is a skill set that is developed through dialogues with instructors wherein the judge is accountable for observations, scoring decisions, etc. Judges should be prepared to account for their scoring decisions. We would like to provide a critique approach that will allow for and promote the exchange of information and where judges account for their decisions.

SCORING OBSERVATIONS

Consistent scoring is a major concern for judges and instructors. There are some situations that lead to numbers that fluctuate week to week or performance to performance. We are sensitive to the impact this has on the participants and the insecurity it places on the instructor. We have identified several factors contributing to this problem.

- Inconsistent exposure places both judges and groups at a disadvantage. The local judge may be measuring the Group's growth; the WGI judge may be unaware of this factor but will be trying to grade relatively to all other A, Open, or World Class groups viewed that season. This difference can be reflected in the scores.
- When a large number of groups are very similar to each other, in either program or achievement, judges' rankings may be more at variance resulting in placement differences. This is why groups are encouraged to establish an identity, a program that will set them apart from their competitors and perhaps offer them a competitive edge.
- The size of the contest can influence ratings significantly as more and more groups come together and must be ranked. Smaller regionals sometimes yield scores that are higher than is appropriate in light of the fact that shows are often not fully complete and the judge's number base is not yet established. Subsequently, larger regionals expose the groups to a broader field of competitors and the process of ranking can lower the earlier score in some cases.
- One of the biggest questions in the minds of most instructors arises at Championships when the double panels may yield ranking differences of several places. The obvious instinctive reaction is that one of the judges is incorrect. Usually, it will be presumed to be the judge with the lowest ranking. The truth of the matter is that when judges have seen some of the groups and not others,

there is a different familiarity in the mix. Sometimes there has been an opportunity to critique with those instructors and the group may stand out in the judge's mind. Couple this with the similarity between many groups (especially in the middle of the class) and these ranking separations can easily occur. It is for this very reason that championship panels have always been doubled. It is a safeguard for all competitors. One of the prime purposes of the double panel at Championships is to assure the Group of the fairness that the average score will yield. Over the years, it has become very clear that for the most part the average score is usually quite fair and equitable. The instructors' focus should go to this average score and ranking more than to the individual scores that comprised the average score.

JUDGES' CONTEST PROCEDURES

DUTIES OF THE CONTEST CHIEF JUDGE

- Check with the Contest Director on:
  - Whether or not the scores have been verified.
  - Any judge absenteeism if this occurs.
  - Choose and govern seating of the judges.
- Conduct a judges' meeting before the contest covering location of critique, etc.
- Be sure the T & P judge has measured and marked the floor.
- Check for AC power specifications at the front and back of the competition area.
- Check the accommodations of the judges to ensure that they have privacy, room to write, electricity if needed, and a good view.
- Be available to the Contest Director for recommendations on penalties or problems that may occur.
- Observe the conformance of the judges to the Code of Ethics.
- Supervise the critique.

DUTIES OF THE JUDGE

- Report to the Chief Judge at the time specified on your assignment sheet.
- While a uniform is not required, professional attire is expected.
- Once a Group has begun their show, there will be no conversations between judges or trial judges.
- Smoking is not permitted. No judge may leave without permission of the Chief Judge.
- Judges MUST be available for the critique. The Chief Judge has the right to cancel the post-prelim critique should the judges have less than two (2) hours between contests.

JUDGES' GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Duties

1. Judges are to rate the groups.
2. Judges are to rank the groups with consideration to comparative scores earned during the course of the contest.
3. Judges are to aid the group's improvement through recorded comments and in critique.

All regionals will attempt to hold a critique if at all possible. Instructors attending critique are requested to participate in a post event survey that will be sent via email to the primary contact of the Group.

Conduct

All judges are expected to maintain a dignified and impartial attitude at all times. They should refrain from discussing the performance with spectators or other judges while adjudicating the contest.

Logistics and Position

The Music judge will be positioned low in the stands, but in position to adjudicate peripheral contributions from the Group. The Effect-Music, Effect-Visual, and the Visual Judges will be seated higher in the stands to better assess to the totality of efforts. The Effect Judge for concert classes will be positioned the same as the Effect judges for the marching classes.

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY GENERAL TECHNIQUES

1. This system is designed to provide the groups with an all-encompassing commentary and critique of their presentation as it occurs. It allows the judge to comment during both the impression and analysis phases of adjudication.
2. Commentary Priorities:
    a. Comments should assist the understanding of the rating/ranking process.
    b. Comments should emphasize those parts of the show that are pertinent to the scoring process.
    c. Comments should assist the instructor in improving the structure of the program or the performance.
    d. Comments should reflect an educational approach that rewards achievement & encourages greater efforts.
3. Recorders will run continuously throughout the Group's presentation.
4. The judge's comments should include basic impression as well as an analysis of successful and problematic areas. Possible suggestions to improve certain aspects of the program/performance are encouraged. Comments should be moderate in tone.
5. Judges must be specific in identifying any aspect about which he/she is commenting.
6. Demeaning or rude comments are unacceptable.
7. Judges should modulate the volume of their voices so as not to interfere with other judges or with spectators.
8. While it is not necessary that a recording be completely filled with comments, the judge should know that the absence of any comments (even at a finals contest) is not acceptable.

DIALOGUE & OBSERVATIONS

Judges will address the groups based upon the Group's level of development. It has always been inappropriate to measure younger groups based on World Class standards when their learning process has not yet brought them to that level. The educational base upon which we adjudicate requires an adjustment of the judge's expectations and observations from class to class.

- Speak from a clear and complete understanding of each class and their level of development. Always be sensitive to your tone of voice.
- Commentary must be relative to the expectations of each class. Reinforce the importance of training and a strong curriculum, and then reinforce the achievement.
- Avoid terminology that is irrelevant to the principles we are reinforcing. Clear, specific dialog is appropriate. All groups will be comfortable with terms in this manual. Avoid the recitation of terms that are not easily related to what you are observing.

- The consistency of judges' observations is essential for the assured growth of all participants. Be informed and current with your caption philosophy and with the levels of learning within each class criteria.
- Be specific in your observation of weak areas and be clear as to the problems. Be enthusiastic about training, growth, and achievement.
- Offer patience and support in the development process of skills, ideas, and works in progress.
- Be open minded to new and innovative concepts that you may not have experienced before. Discuss these concepts and learn about them in order to adjudicate them.

THE CRITIQUE

The critique is an opportunity for instructor and judge to exchange insights relative to the performance of the Group. It is most often for the benefit of the instructor, although the exchange of information can be beneficial to the judge as well. The critique belongs to the instructor, who should take the lead, ask the questions, and guide the dialogue.

Participation at critique is optional. If the instructor is comfortable with the judge's evaluation and score, and has nothing to discuss, the instructor should feel no obligation to participate.

THE PURPOSE BEHIND THE CRITIQUE

- To clarify judge's comments which are confusing or unclear.
- To discuss places in the show that were unclear or to which the judge did not respond favorably.
- To offer insights to the judge relative to your intent: Where you're heading in the program/vocabulary development, when you plan to implement changes, when you are scheduled to address concerns expressed by the judge.
- To discuss your score relative to the criteria of each score sheet and relative to your competitors.
- To ascertain insights as to where you might stand "nationally" (if this is pertinent).

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE CRITIQUE

- You are best prepared if you watch your group's performance from the perspective of the judge.
- Study and know the scoring system and understand the philosophy behind each sheet.
- Listen to the evaluations of the judges to whom you will speak at the critique.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR CRITIQUE TIME

- Be sensitive to the fact that effective communication will breakdown if either party is in an emotional state. Remember that body language and tone of voice will communicate a great deal.
- Go directly to the judge; introduce yourself and your Group's name.
- Critiques are short and it is important for you to get to your point quickly so that the judges can explain why he or she evaluated the program as they did.

CRITIQUE ETIQUETTE

- Please don't criticize or berate another group or their performance.
- Never use profanity in your dialogue.

- Please don't attack the judge's integrity or intelligence. It could create barriers that will be counterproductive to good communication.
- Don't ask the judge to tell you how to write your show.
- Don't ask the judge to comment on ideas that are not yet in the show. Don't ask for a scoring projection for something that isn't yet in the show.

INSTRUCTOR'S RECOURSE FOR COMPETITIVE OR JUDGING ISSUES

If you have an adjudication concern or issue, please contact the Percussion Judge Administrator or Director of Percussion

- If the situation occurs as a result of a preliminary contest, please be prepared to discuss your issues at critique with the judge.
- If, after critique, you still have issues with a judge, please contact a percussion administrator or the chief judge.
- If, after speaking with a percussion administrator or Chief Judge, you feel that your issues are NOT resolved, please contact the Judge Administrator or Director of Percussion.
- If, after following the above process, you still feel the need to go forward with a formal protest, a written statement must be sent to Director of Percussion Mark Thurston (mark@wgi.org) within 48 hours of the contest, providing reasons why you feel this protest exists.

ADJUDICATING EFFECT

Effect judges are responsible for evaluating the show from a holistic perspective, assessing all elements of the program. Effect judges should allow themselves to react, letting the show come to them, and be a reflection of the program and the participants. The subjective reactions of the Effect judge should be filtered through the sub-caption criteria, and considered in terms of the Intellectual Effectiveness, Aesthetic Effectiveness, and/or the Emotional Effectiveness of the design choice or performance.

Judges should assess the effectiveness of a show by channeling reactions first through the Overall Effect sub-caption. The Overall Effect sub-caption criteria are identical on both the Effect-Music and Effect-Visual sheet. Effect judges should judge through time, keeping all aspects of the program and performance in context. Micro reactions should be related to macro reactions, recognizing how each individual effect contributes to and enhances the overall effect.

Like the Music and Visual captions, the Effect captions are judged on a sub-caption basis. The Effect sheets are designed to profile independently the strengths and weaknesses of a group's Overall Effectiveness in one sub-caption and Music or Visual Effectiveness in the other. It should be understood however that criteria in one sub-caption could influence the effectiveness of the other sub-caption. The Effect captions are not traditional captions delineated by separate 'What/How' sub-captions. Effect judges must consider and assess 'What' and 'How' simultaneously within each of the sub-captions, even without the traditional 'What/ How' scoring distinction.

There is no priority on any one approach to creating effect. Effect judges must be accountable for considering and comparing the effectiveness of each design choice. All design choices are given equal opportunity for success. Pure excellence can elevate the effectiveness of a design choice or be an effect in and of itself. In the Effect captions, pure excellence is only one element, and its presence may or may not be critical to generating effect.

Creativity and originality are the cornerstones of the diversity that is encouraged in WGI. In all classes, but particularly in the World Classes, designers will take the risk of exploring new material. When recognizing and rewarding the creativity of a program, Effect judges should encourage designers to take the risk of exploring new material and not disregard these efforts or diminish their value just because they may not fall within the scope of the judge's comfort zone of recognition. That said, originality in and of itself is not the sole basis for reward. It must also fulfill all other components of producing effect. Encouragement for creative and original efforts should be acknowledged through verbal recognition regardless of the level of perceived success.

Effect is judged by two individuals, one Effect-Music judge and one Effect-Visual judge.

- Effect-Music scoring (30%) will be 15% Overall Effect and 15% Music Effect.
- Effect-Visual (20%) will be 10% Overall Effect and 10% Visual Effect.

EFFECT-MUSIC

Credit the effectiveness of all elements in contributing to both the overall presentation and music presentation. Consider the musical elements that contribute to create an engaging program, successful blending of musical and visual elements that together elevate the program, communication of identity and show concept, quality blend of creativity and performance, and the performers' ability to connect with the audience over time.

OVERALL EFFECT	MUSIC EFFECT
Program	The Musical Journey
Creativity	Creativity
Communication	Musicianship
Engagement	Artistry
Coordination	Excellence as Effect
Range of Effects	

OVERALL EFFECT DEFINITIONS

Program – The plan that guides and motivates all design choice, presenting opportunities for inherent and manufactured effectiveness. The effective blend of musical, visual and programmatic choices, which provides a vehicle for emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic communication.

Creativity – The originality, uniqueness, and imagination infused into the overall program and presentation.

Communication – The performance techniques that effectively express ideas and connect with the audience.

Engagement – The ability to secure, captivate, and sustain the attention of the audience.

Coordination – The harmonious combination and interaction of musical and visual elements that together elevate the program.

Range of Effects – The varied displays of programmatic effectiveness, though time via pacing and continuity, and in isolation via planned events and punctuations.

MUSIC EFFECT DEFINITIONS

The Musical Journey – The effective use of repertoire and orchestration techniques to establish and sustain the intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic relationships over time.

Creativity – The originality, uniqueness, and imagination infused into the musical program and presentation.

Musicianship – The understanding and artistic sensitivity of the written score through expression, blend, balance, and idiomatic interpretation.

Artistry – The subtlety, nuance, detail, craft, and proficiency that elevate the fit and finish of the presentation.

Excellence as Effect – The virtuosity or technical proficiency of the performer(s) that elicits positive responses from the listener.

percussion

effect-music

marching percussion ensembles

Credit the effectiveness of all elements in contributing to both the overall presentation and music presentation. Consider the musical elements that contribute to create an engaging program, successful blending of musical and visual elements that together elevate the program, communication of identity and show concept, quality blend of creativity and performance, and the performers' ability to connect with the audience over time.

overall effect

- Program
- Creativity
- Communication
- Engagement
- Coordination
- Range of Effects

score

100

music effect

- The Musical Journey
- Creativity
- Musicianship
- Artistry
- Excellence as Effect

score

100

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percussion

effect-music

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overall effect

Class A
Basic Concepts & Skills

Open Class
Intermediate Concepts & Skills

World Class
Advanced Concepts & Skills

who had the greater understanding/achievement as it relates to...

Program: The plan that guides and motivates all design choices, presenting opportunities for inherent and manufactured effectiveness. The effective blend of musical, visual, and programmatic choices, which provides a vehicle for emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic communication.

Creativity: The originality, uniqueness, and imagination infused into the overall program and presentation.

Communication: The performance techniques that effectively express ideas and connect with the audience.

Engagement: The ability to secure, captivate, and sustain the attention of the audience.

Coordination: The harmonious combination and interaction of musical and visual elements that together elevate the program.

Range of Effects: The varied displays of programmatic effectiveness, through time via pacing and continuity, and in isolation via planned events and punctuations.

	BOX 1	BOX 2	BOX 3	BOX 4	BOX 5
Descriptors	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Consistently
Numerical Range	0 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 79	80 to 89	90 to 100
Learning Steps	Experience	Discover	Know	Understand	Apply

music effect

Class A
Basic Concepts & Skills

Open Class
Intermediate Concepts & Skills

World Class
Advanced Concepts & Skills

who had the greater understanding/achievement as it relates to...

The Musical Journey: The effective use of repertoire and orchestration techniques to establish and sustain the intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic relationships over time.

Creativity: The originality, uniqueness, and imagination infused into the musical program and presentation.

Musicianship: The understanding and artistic sensitivity of the written score through expression, blend, balance, and idiomatic interpretation.

Artistry: The subtlety, nuance, detail, craft, and proficiency that elevate the fit and finish of the presentation.

Excellence as Effect: The virtuosity or technical proficiency of the performer(s) that elicits positive responses from the listener.

SUB-CAPTION SPREADS

Very Comparable	Minor Differences	Definitive Differences	Significant Differences
1 to 2 percentage points	3 to 4 percentage points	5 to 7 percentage points	8 and higher percentage points

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EFFECT-VISUAL

Credit the effectiveness of all elements in contributing to both the overall presentation and visual presentation. Consider the visual elements that contribute to create an engaging program, successful blending of musical and visual elements that together elevate the program, communication of identity and show concept, quality blend of creativity and performance, and the performers' ability to connect with the audience over time.

OVERALL EFFECT	VISUAL EFFECT
Program	The Visual Journey
Creativity	Creativity
Communication	Musicality
Engagement	Artistry
Coordination	Excellence as Effect
Range of Effects	

OVERALL EFFECT DEFINITIONS

Program – The plan that guides and motivates all design choices, presenting opportunities for inherent and manufactured effectiveness. The effective blend of musical, visual, and programmatic choices, which provides a vehicle for emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic communication.

Creativity – The originality, uniqueness, and imagination infused into the overall program and presentation.

Communication – The performance techniques that effectively express ideas and connect with the audience.

Engagement – The ability to secure, captivate, and sustain the attention of the audience.

Coordination – The harmonious combination and interaction of musical and visual elements that together elevate the program.

Range of Effects – The varied displays of programmatic effectiveness, through time via pacing and continuity, and in isolation via planned events and punctuations.

VISUAL EFFECT DEFINITIONS

Visual Journey – The effective use of form, movement, color and characterization to establish and sustain intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic relationships over time.

Creativity – The originality, uniqueness, and imagination infused into the visual program and presentation.

Musicality – The understanding and artistic sensitivity of the written work that accurately reflects, interprets, expresses, and enhances the music.

Artistry – The subtlety, nuance, detail, craft, and proficiency that elevate the fit and finish of the presentation.

Excellence as Effect – The virtuosity or technical proficiency of the performer(s) that elicits positive responses from the viewer.

percussion

effect-visual

marching percussion ensembles

Credit the effectiveness of all elements in contributing to both the overall presentation and visual presentation. Consider the visual elements that contribute to create an engaging program, successful blending of musical and visual elements that together elevate the program, communication of identity and show concept, quality blend of creativity and performance, and the performers' ability to connect with the audience over time.

overall effect

- Program
- Creativity
- Communication
- Engagement
- Coordination
- Range of Effects

score

100

visual effect

- The Visual Journey
- Creativity
- Musicality
- Artistry
- Excellence as Effect

score

100

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percussion

effect-visual

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overall effect

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who had the greater understanding/achievement as it relates to...

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	BOX 1	BOX 2	BOX 3	BOX 4	BOX 5
Descriptors	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Consistently
Numerical Range	0 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 79	80 to 89	90 to 100
Learning Steps	Experience	Discover	Know	Understand	Apply

visual effect

Class A
Basic Concepts & Skills

Open Class
Intermediate Concepts & Skills

World Class
Advanced Concepts & Skills

who had the greater understanding/achievement as it relates to...

The Visual Journey: The effective use of form, movement, color, and characterization to establish and sustain intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic relationships over time.

Creativity: The originality, uniqueness, and imagination infused into the visual program and presentation.

Musicality: The understanding and artistic sensitivity of the written work that accurately reflects, interprets, expresses, and enhances the music.

Artistry: The subtlety, nuance, detail, craft, and proficiency that elevate the fit and finish of the presentation.

Excellence as Effect: The virtuosity or technical proficiency of the performer(s) that elicits positive responses from the viewer.

SUB-CAPTION SPREADS

Very Comparable	Minor Differences	Definitive Differences	Significant Differences
1 to 2 percentage points	3 to 4 percentage points	5 to 7 percentage points	8 and higher percentage points

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MUSIC

Credit the realization of compositional and performance excellence displayed by the members of the Group, both collectively and individually. Consider the orchestrational devices utilized, vocabulary exhibited, layered responsibilities presented, and degree of achievement demonstrated by the performers over time.

COMPOSITION	PERFORMANCE QUALITY
Orchestration	Sound Production
- *Elements of Design*	Musicianship
Melody-Harmony-Rhythm-Dynamics	Rhythmic Clarity
- *Range of Content*	Uniformity
- *Variety*	Group Cohesiveness
- *Continuity*	
Clarity of Intent	
Simultaneous Responsibility	

COMPOSITION DEFINITIONS

Orchestration (Horizontal & Vertical): The arrangement and coordination of musical devices, both through time and in any one moment of time.

Elements of Design: The purposeful use of melody, harmony, rhythm, and dynamics within the program.

Range of Content: The purposeful use of musical and technical repertoire and vocabulary in the program.

Variety: The purposeful use of instrumentation, color, texture, timbre, intensity, and tempo utilized in the program.

Continuity: The successful combination of all elements used to present a unified flow and form of musical ideas.

Clarity of Intent: The presentation of compositional elements in a clear, accessible, and intelligible manner.

Simultaneous Responsibility: The layering of responsibilities placed upon the performers.

PERFORMANCE QUALITY DEFINITIONS

Sound Production: The ability of the performers to clearly present the composition through balance, blend, sonority, fidelity, and quality of sound.

Musicianship: The ability of the performers to convey compositional intent and expressive qualities.

Rhythmic Clarity: The ability of the performers to accurately present rhythmic content.

Uniformity: The consistent presentation of technique, phrasing, and quality of sound from performer to performer.

Group Cohesiveness: The ability of the Group to establish and maintain pulse control and rhythmic stability, including adaptation and recovery if necessary.

percussion

music

marching percussion ensembles

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composition

- Orchestration
  - Elements of Design
    - *Melody – Harmony – Rhythm – Dynamics*
  - Range of Content
  - Variety
  - Continuity
- Clarity of Intent
- Simultaneous Responsibility

score

100

performance quality

- Sound Production
- Musicianship
- Rhythmic Clarity
- Uniformity
- Ensemble Cohesiveness

score

100

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percussion

music

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composition

Class A
Basic Concepts

Open Class
Intermediate Concepts

World Class
Advanced Concepts

who had the greater understanding/achievement as it relates to...

Orchestration (Horizontal & Vertical): The arrangement and coordination of musical devices, both through time and in any one moment of time.

- **Elements of Design:** The purposeful use of melody, harmony, rhythm, and dynamics within the program.
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Simultaneous Responsibility: The layering of responsibilities placed upon the performers.

	BOX 1	BOX 2	BOX 3	BOX 4	BOX 5
Descriptors	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Consistently
Numerical Range	0 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 79	80 to 89	90 to 100
Learning Steps	Experience	Discover	Know	Understand	Apply

performance

Class A
Basic Skills

Open Class
Intermediate Skills

World Class
Advanced Skills

who had the greater understanding/achievement as it relates to...

Sound Production: The ability of the performers to clearly present the composition through balance, blend, sonority, fidelity, and quality of sound.

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VISUAL

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COMPOSITION	PERFORMANCE QUALITY
Orchestration	Accuracy
- *Elements of Design*	Movement
- *Principles of Design*	Presence
- *Motion & Movement*	Uniformity
- *Creativity*	Group Cohesiveness
Interpretation of the Audio	
Clarity of Intent	
Simultaneous Responsibilities	

COMPOSITION DEFINITIONS

Orchestration (Horizontal & Vertical): The arrangement and coordination of visual devices, both through time and in any one moment of time.

Elements of Design: The purposeful use of line, shape, form, space, color, and texture within the program.

Principles of Design: The purposeful use of balance, contrast, emphasis, unity, proportion, and variety within the program.

Motion & Movement: The purposeful use of movement, timing, choreography, and motion within the program.

Creativity: The originality, uniqueness, and imagination infused into the composition.

Interpretation of the Audio: The purposeful marriage of the visual and audio composition.

Clarity of Intent: The presentation of the compositional elements in a clear, accessible, and intelligible manner.

Simultaneous Responsibilities: The layering of responsibilities placed upon the performers.

PERFORMANCE QUALITY DEFINITIONS

Accuracy: The ability of the performers to clearly present the composition through precision, detail, and finesse.

Movement: The performers' application of movement principles and application of expressive range through varied efforts.

Presence: The poise, carriage, and expressive qualities of the performers used to elevate the written program beyond technical accuracy.

Uniformity: The consistent presentation of technique, style, and characterization from performer to performer.

Group Cohesiveness: The ability of the Group to establish and maintain control and stability, including adaptation and recovery if necessary.

percussion

visual

marching percussion ensembles

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composition

- Orchestration
  - Elements of Design
  - Principles of Design
  - Motion & Movement
  - Creativity
- Interpretation of the Audio
- Clarity of Intent
- Simultaneous Responsibilities

score

100

performance quality

- Accuracy
- Movement
- Presence
- Uniformity
- Ensemble Cohesiveness

score

100

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percussion

visual

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composition

Class A
Basic Concepts

Open Class
Intermediate Concepts

World Class
Advanced Concepts

who had the greater understanding/achievement as it relates to...

Orchestration (Horizontal & Vertical): The arrangement and coordination of visual devices, both through time and in any one moment of time.

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Simultaneous Responsibilities: The layering of responsibilities placed upon the performers.

	BOX 1	BOX 2	BOX 3	BOX 4	BOX 5
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Numerical Range	0 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 79	80 to 89	90 to 100
Learning Steps	Experience	Discover	Know	Understand	Apply

performance

Class A
Basic Skills

Open Class
Intermediate Skills

World Class
Advanced Skills

who had the greater understanding/achievement as it relates to...

Accuracy: The ability of the performers to clearly present the composition through precision, detail, and finesse.

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CONCERT PERCUSSION

This class is designed for those groups whose single emphasis is the exploration and development of musical presentations. Their repertoire may include original compositions and/or arrangements or transcriptions of existing materials. The expectations of the judge will be different from those of the marching Group. In this class, the concert stage will be set to deliver the sound from a stationary focal point. Programs for the concert class can be drawn from ANY musical idiom, all of which will have an equal opportunity to succeed. The scoring system will attempt to measure the level of artistry and performance quality contained in the Group's program as demonstrated by the performers.

Effect

Credit the effectiveness of all elements that contribute to the program and fulfillment of the presentation. Consider the musical elements that contribute to create an engaging program, communication of identity and programmatic concept, quality blend of creativity and performance, and the performers' ability to connect with the audience over time.

PROGRAM	FULFILLMENT
The Musical Journey	Communication
Creativity	Musicianship
Coordination	Presence
Range of Effects	Excellence as it Relates to Artistry
	Expression

PROGRAM DEFINITIONS:

The Musical Journey - The effective use of repertoire and orchestration techniques to establish and sustain the intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic relationships over time.

Creativity - The originality, uniqueness, and imagination infused into the overall program and presentation

Coordination - The harmonious combination and interaction of musical and/or conceptual elements that together elevate the program.

Range of Effects - The varied displays of programmatic effectiveness, through time via pacing and continuity, and in isolation via planned events and punctuations

FULFILLMENT DEFINITIONS

Communication - The performance techniques that effectively express ideas and connect with the audience.

Musicianship - The understanding and artistic sensitivity of the written score through expression, blend, balance, and idiomatic interpretation.

Artistry - The subtlety, nuance, detail, craft, and proficiency that elevate the fit and finish of the presentation.

Presence - The apparent poise and effectiveness enabling a connection between performer and audience in real-time.

Excellence as Effect - The virtuosity or technical proficiency of the performer(s) that elicits positive responses from the listener.

percussion

effect

concert percussion ensembles

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program

- The Musical Journey
- Creativity
- Coordination
- Range of Effects

score

100

fulfilment

- Communication
- Musicianship
- Artistry
- Presence
- Excellence as Effect

score

100

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percussion

effect

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program

Class A
Basic Concepts & Skills

Open Class
Intermediate Concepts & Skills

World Class
Advanced Concepts & Skills

who had the greater understanding/achievement as it relates to...

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fulfillment

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Open Class
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World Class
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MUSIC

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COMPOSITION
- Orchestration
  - *Elements of Design*
    - *Melody-Harmony-Rhythm-Dynamics*
  - *Range of Content*
  - *Variety*
  - *Continuity*
- Clarity of Intent
- Simultaneous Responsibility

PERFORMANCE QUALITY
- Sound Production
- Musicianship
- Rhythmic Clarity
- Uniformity
- Group Cohesiveness

COMPOSITION DEFINITIONS

Orchestration (Horizontal & Vertical): The arrangement and coordination of musical devices, both through time and in any one moment of time.

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percussion

music

concert percussion ensembles

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composition

- Orchestration
  - Elements of Design
    - *Melody – Harmony – Rhythm – Dynamics*
  - Range of Content
  - Variety
  - Continuity
- Clarity of Intent
- Simultaneous Responsibility

score

100

performance quality

- Sound Production
- Musicianship
- Rhythmic Clarity
- Uniformity
- Ensemble Cohesiveness

score

100

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percussion

music

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composition

Class A
Basic Concepts

Open Class
Intermediate Concepts

World Class
Advanced Concepts

who had the greater understanding/achievement as it relates to...

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Learning Steps	Experience	Discover	Know	Understand	Apply

performance

Class A
Basic Skills

Open Class
Intermediate Skills

World Class
Advanced Skills

who had the greater understanding/achievement as it relates to...

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WGI PERCUSSION CONTEST RULES
2026

WGI discourages independent groups from utilizing high school students who were previously enrolled in an active high school program and have not yet graduated.

WGI also discourages independent groups from utilizing participants who have outstanding monies owed to a previous group.

WGI strongly recommends that participating groups and their adult supervisors use the utmost caution and forethought in planning and use of props that might place participants (and others) in potential danger during assembly or use.

WGI strongly recommends that all participants wear protective footwear while outside the performance area.

1.0 ELIGIBILITY

1.1 Percussion groups from the United States competing in the Independent class and composed of participants not over 22 years of age as of 12:01 AM on April 1, 2026, shall be permitted to compete in contests governed by WGI. Each group appearing at a WGI contest shall be prepared to show proof of age. International independent groups are not bound by any age limit.

1.1.1 U.S. Military veterans may be granted one (1) year of eligibility immediately following their end of active service. To qualify, individuals must have enlisted prior to their 19th birthday, served for no less than four (4) years, and must have been honorably discharged or medically separated. Veterans must submit a copy of their discharge papers and separation documents to WGI prior to December 1 to qualify.

1.2 All participants of any competing group in any scholastic class must have approval for participation in any WGI-sanctioned event by the administration of the sponsoring school(s) or educational institution.

1.2.1 Types of groups in the Scholastic classes are defined as follows:

Single School. A competing group whose total membership are students from the same school, schools that feed directly into that school, or home-schooled students that reside within the school district boundaries. The group shall submit the Single School Participating Master Group Agreement signed by the authorizing school principal or administrator and file with the WGI office.

Combined Schools. The purpose of the combined schools policy is to encourage participation from scholastic groups that may have limited resources while keeping the integrity of the scholastic classes intact. Combining schools for the purpose of competitive advantage is contrary to this policy and will not be approved.

A competing group in any scholastic class may apply for approval to combine students from multiple schools within a school district under the following guidelines:

- Groups applying to combine students from multiple schools within a school district must apply for approval by December 1.
- Groups combining students from multiple schools within a school district may not have another group in the same division (Color Guard, Percussion, or Winds) participating locally with a Circuit Partner or WGI.
- Only one (1) group, competitive or otherwise, can result from the combining of schools.
- If a school has a marching band program, the school is not eligible to combine with another school.
- There can be no auditions for any kind to determine participation in a combined school program.
- Groups utilizing students from parochial, vocational, or charter schools must apply for approval under combined school guidelines.
- If approved, combined school groups may be required to compete using a school district name.
- All approved combined school groups shall submit the Combined Schools Participating Group Master Agreement signed by the district superintendent and file with the WGI office.
- WGI will have the final determination on whether a competing group will be permitted to combine students from multiple schools. If the application for combined schools is denied, the group has the option to either not include students from other schools or compete in an independent class.

1.3 Competing groups must have a minimum of five (5) participants in the competition area at any time, including one optional conductor.

1.4 Marching percussion groups may use one optional student conductor positioned in the competition area. Concert percussion groups may use one non-student conductor positioned in the competition area.

PENALTY: Disqualification - Any competing group violating any requirement in the Eligibility section shall be disqualified from that contest and must forfeit any scores, placements, or awards.

2.0 COMPETITION AREA

2.1 The "competition area" shall measure a minimum of sixty feet by ninety feet (60' x 90') and does not include entry ramps, hallways, bleachers, or seating areas. Competing groups are permitted to utilize the entire designated competition area for their performance. All participants must be in the designated competition area when performance time begins. Depending on the performance venue, WGI will authorize additional competition area space whenever possible and include that information in the diagram (footprint) available to all competing groups to identify the competition area. No competition area may exceed the maximum size of the competition area (72' x 106') offered at the world championships. While

the competition area will be increased whenever possible, all competing groups must be prepared to perform within the minimum sixty-foot by ninety-foot (60' x 90') area.

2.2 All WGI contest sites must have a minimum of seventy feet by one hundred feet (70' x 100') to ensure the necessary space for a "safety zone" of five (5) feet from any spectator seating , and the minimum sixty-foot by ninety-foot (60' x 90') competition area within the site.

2.3 Once performance timing begins, no participant may enter the safety zone. All equipment and props (including all sound equipment) must be grounded within the competition area except during setup and teardown. No props or equipment may be staged within the safety zone and no choreography outside the competition area, including the safety zone, is allowed.

PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty for each participant or piece of equipment in violation of the safety zone.

2.4 The front boundary line shall be considered to extend the full width of the competition area and shall be clearly marked at a minimum of five (5') feet from the first row of spectator seating.

PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty for each participant or piece of equipment in violation of the competition area boundary.

2.5 The center of the front boundary line shall be marked by a six-inch (6") taped line at the front and back of the competition area. The outer edges of the competition area shall also be marked by six-inch (6") taped lines at the corners to designate the safety zone.

2.6 All floor coverings (tarps) must fit in the designated competition area and may not enter the safety zone or cover the front boundary line.

PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty for each participant or piece of equipment in violation of the competition area boundary.

2.7 120-volt grounded power sources shall be available at the front and back of the center line of the competition area and will be the only power sources available for use. Competing groups may not plug into any wall outlet in the competition area and must provide extension cords.

2.8 Power sources must be dedicated for competing group use only and have no other electrical devices using these designated power sources.

3.0 SCORING

3.1 The elements in the Marching classes to be judged are:

3.1.1 Effect-Music = Thirty percent (30%), one judge
Overall Effect = Fifteen percent (15%)
Music Effect = Fifteen percent (15%)

3.1.2 Effect-Visual = Twenty percent (20%), one judge
Overall Effect = Ten percent (10%)
Visual Effect = Ten percent (10%)

3.1.3 Music = Thirty percent (30%), one judge
Composition = Ten percent (10%)
Performance Quality = Twenty percent (20%)

3.1.4 Visual = Twenty percent (20%), one judge
Composition = Ten percent (10%)
Performance Quality = Ten percent (10%)

3.1.5 Timing and Penalties = Penalties assessed per rules

3.2 The elements in Concert classes to be judged are:

3.2.1 Music = Fifty percent (50%), one judge
Composition = Twenty percent (20%)
Performance Quality = Thirty percent (30%)

3.2.2 Effect = Fifty percent (50%), one judge
Program = Twenty percent (20%)
Fulfillment = Thirty percent (30%)

3.2.2 Timing and Penalties = Penalties assessed per rules

3.3 The Music judge will be positioned low in the stands. The Effect and Visual judges will be positioned higher in the audience viewing area. The Timing and Penalty judge will be positioned in the competition area. Specific row assignments will be determined by the Chief Judge based on each venue's specific attributes.

4.0 EQUIPMENT

4.1 For the protection of the contest site, especially wooden competition floors and easements, competing groups must properly prepare all equipment and props to ensure that damage to the facilities will not occur. All equipment will be subject to inspection. Any damage to the contest site (dragging timpani, wheels on carts locking, improperly prepared equipment, etc.) that may arise will be the responsibility of the competing group.

PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty per piece of equipment

4.2 All electronically produced musical material must be triggered in real-time, and no single, triggered, electronic sound may produce rhythmic intent.

4.2.1 Human-voice samples presented as singing or spoken word may be performed with single or multiple triggers, regardless of any rhythmic intent.

PENALTY: Ten-point (10.0) penalty

4.3 Definitions of authorized equipment and use:

4.3.1 Groups may remotely operate their sound system for the purpose of live mixing the performance through a self-supplied wireless network. WGI will provide an area in or near the Effect & Visual judging area for one designated staff member to wirelessly mix during the performance. The sound system must remain in the competition area. Staff members may also communicate through a text-based messaging tool to a designated participant in the event the sound system needs adjustment.

4.3.2 All electronically produced musical material must be triggered by a participant in the competition area. Staff members may not trigger sounds or musical material.

4.3.3 All lighting and robotic devices must be controlled by a participant in the competition area. Staff members may also communicate through a text-based messaging tool to a designated participant in the event the lighting or robotics need adjustment.

PENALTY: Two-point (2.0) penalty

4.3.4 During a performance, non-performing personnel may not coach, cue, etc., any participants, trigger any audio events, or control any wireless lighting or robotic events from outside the competition area. As per rule 4.3.1 and 4.3.3, staff members may communicate via text message with a designated participant controlling the sound system, lighting or robotics.

PENALTY: One point (1.0) to Disqualification at the discretion of the Timing and Penalties judge

4.3.5 Groups may use any electrical device within their program deemed safe by the Contest Administrator. The Contest Administrator has the ultimate decision regarding the safety of any device in consultation with the Director of Percussion and/or Chief Executive Officer. Groups should consult with the Director of Percussion prior to using any equipment not specifically defined in these rules. The Group will assume any liability for issues arising out of the use of said electrical devices.

PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty to Disqualification at the discretion of the Timing and Penalty judge.

4.3.6 Battery-operated devices using common off-the-shelf flashlight batteries (AA, AAA, AAAA, C, D, N, 9V, button cells) and dry-cell secondary "rechargeable batteries" including cell phones, cameras, MP3 players and computers are allowed. Sealed, spill-proof maintenance-free lead-acid batteries such as gel cell, sealed lead-acid (SLA), valve regulated sealed lead-acid (VRLA), and absorbed glass mat (AGM) batteries are also permitted.

4.4 The following items are NOT allowed in the competition area:

4.4.1 Pyrotechnics, discharge of arms, pressurized canisters, dry ice, smoke machines, compressed air apparatuses, dangerous materials, and/or flammable liquids or gases will not be permitted in or around the competition area.

4.4.2 Gasoline or manual-powered generators.

4.4.3 Live animals.

4.4.4 Powder, dirt, or any other substance that lingers in the competition area past the interval time.

4.4.5 Helium, including helium-filled balloons.

4.4.6 Motorized vehicles such as golf carts, tractors, all-terrain vehicles, etc. Motorized wheelchairs for participants with disabilities will be allowed.

4.4.7 Objects that may break or leave shards of glass in the competition area. Mirrors must be made of acrylic and cannot contain glass. Any light bulbs used must be shatter-resistant and safety-coated.

4.4.8 Drones or any remote-controlled airborne devices.

4.4.9 Hover boards.

4.4.10 Signal jamming devices including, but not limited to, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and cellular devices.

4.4.11 Special effect lighting without prior approval from the Director of Percussion.

4.4.11.1 Use of strobe lights require a warning to the audience by the competing group prior to the performance.

4.4.12 Any use of the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) or Emergency Alert System (EAS) common audio attention signal (illegal under FCC regulations).

WGI shall always have the final authority to prohibit the use of any item if it is determined to pose an unreasonable or unacceptable risk of injury or harm to participants, others, or to the venue and its property.

Directors are encouraged to contact the Director of Percussion to inquire about the use of specific items or materials when its permissibility under this section or to a particular site may be in question.

PENALTY: Five-point (5.0) penalty up to Disqualification for use of any prohibited items.

4.5 All electronically produced musical material must be triggered by a participant in the competition area. Staff members may not trigger sounds or musical material.

4.6 All lighting and robotic devices must be controlled by a participant in the competition area. Staff members may also communicate through a text-based messaging tool to a designated participant in the event the lighting/robotics need adjustment.

PENALTY: Two-point (2.0) penalty

4.7 The following safety guidelines apply to the construction, transport, and use of any prop, structure, or drum major/conducting podium at any WGI event or facility. They apply to all participants, adult supervisors, volunteers, or parents involved in moving or assembling these items. These guidelines are in effect during a group's entire time in the competition area, including set-up and exit.

4.7.1 No participant may be positioned on any part of a prop, structure, or podium where their lowest point of contact (e.g., feet, hands) are more than <u>four feet (4') above the competition floor unless appropriate safety railing, a safety harness, or protective padding is in place around the prop, structure, or podium to prevent injury.</u>

- Safety railing is a barrier at least forty-two inches (42") high at all points and surrounding the participant a minimum of 50%.
- Safety harness is a system designed to restrain a participant and prevent or arrest a fall at least three feet (3') before contact with the competition floor.
- Protective padding is a compressed foam padding (gymnastic mat type) or other suitable material that measures at least two inches (2") in thickness.

4.7.2 If a participant is positioned on any part of a prop, structure, or podium with their lowest point of contact (e.g., feet, hands) are more than four feet (4') above the competition floor, the following applies:

- When in motion: The participant must actively use the appropriate safety railing or be secured with a harness for the entire duration the prop, structure, or podium is in motion.
- When stationary with a safety railing: The participant is not required to actively use the safety railing.
- When stationary without a safety railing: The participant must be secured with a safety harness.

4.7.3 If a participant is positioned on any part of a prop, structure, or podium with their lowest point of contact less than four feet (4') above the competition floor, no safety railing, harness or padding is required-regardless of whether the prop, structure or podium is stationary or in motion.

4.7.4 A participant performing a lift or stunt-either on the ground or atop any prop, structure, or podium-may not raise another participant more than four feet (4') above the competition floor unless protective padding, trained spotters, or other adequate safety precautions are in place.

4.7.5 Participants may not jump or leap from any prop, structure, or podium that is more than four feet (4') above the competition floor unless protective padding or other adequate safety precautions are in place.

4.7.6 Participants may not be positioned on any part of a prop or structure where their lowest point of contact is more than twenty feet (20') above the competition floor.

4.7.7 When a participant is getting on, off, or atop a prop or structure with wheels of any height, wheel locks/brakes must be engaged to restrict movement while the prop/structure is stationary. This requirement does not apply to grounded drum set or timpani carts in the front ensemble.

4.7.8 WGI shall always have the final authority to prohibit the use of any prop, structure, or podium, or to require additional safety measures, if it is determined to pose an unreasonable or unacceptable risk of injury or harm to participants, others, or to the venue and its property.

Directors are encouraged to contact the Director of Percussion to inquire about the use of a particular prop when its permissibility under this section or at a specific contest venue may be in question.

PENALTY: Two-point (2.0) penalty to Disqualification at the discretion of the Percussion Administrator, including (but not limited to) prohibition of the use of prop, structure, or podium

5.0 TIMING

5.1 Percussion groups will be timed to compete at intervals according to class.

Class	Interval Time	Minimum Performance Time	Maximum Performance Time

World Class	11 minutes	4 Minutes	8 minutes
Open Class	10 minutes	3.5 Minutes	7 minutes
A Class	9 minutes	3 Minutes	6 minutes

5.2 Interval time will include entrance, setup, performance, exit, and removal of all participants, props, floors, and equipment from the competition area. Interval time will begin when the Timing and Penalty judge signals the group to start the interval time and conclude when the group clears the vertical or horizontal centerline after the performance. The group must continue to make a deliberate and obvious exit from the competition area and not impede the entrance of the next competing group.

5.3 Each competing group, with all participants, shall remain in the competition area and be judged in all captions for the minimum time defined in Rule 5.1.

5.4 Timing for the "maximum performance time" will begin with the first step of body movement, the first move of equipment, or the first note of music, whichever comes first after the group's announcement, and end at the obvious conclusion of the performance. All captions will be judged until the obvious conclusion of the performance.

5.5 Competing groups cannot be required to perform before the time set in the published Preliminaries schedule. WGI may adjust the published schedule for Finals at the discretion of the Contest Administrator. If a schedule change occurs, competing groups will be notified by text message.

PENALTY: Three-hundredths of a point (.03) penalty per second for any timing violation.

5.6 Should any competing group find themselves unable to perform at their scheduled time, they will be rescheduled to perform during the next most suitable performance slot in their class. The Contest Administrator will make the necessary schedule adjustments.

PENALTY: Five-tenths of a point (0.5) penalty for each class interval time of delay

6.0 ENTRY

6.1 All participants must enter the competition area through the designated entry door, tunnel, or ramp. Before the performance begins, the competing group may utilize the entire competition area for setup and pre-show preparations.

PENALTY: Five-tenths of a point (0.5) penalty per participant for failing to use the designated entry door, tunnel, or ramp

6.2 All props must fit through a standard-size double door with the center bar removed. No exceptions will be made for oversized props regarding timing. Props are not permitted in the competition area before the performing group's scheduled time.

6.3 Any competing group creating a delay in the schedule will be subject to penalty.

PENALTY: Three-hundredths of a point (.03) penalty per second of delay up to ten (10) points.

6.4 The competing group will line up at a designated ready line to enter the competition area.

6.5 Authorized equipment and props may be placed anywhere in the competition area by participants or anyone prior to the start of the performance. Any non-participants involved in the set-up must exit the competition area and safety zones prior to the start of performance time.

PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty for each non-participant failing to exit the competition area and safety zones prior to the performance time.

6.6 Groups may not begin an audible preshow until after the previous group's interval time has concluded.

PENALTY: Two-point (2.0) penalty

6.7 Once the performance begins, participants must remain in the designated competition area until the obvious conclusion of the performance. Participants may not re-enter the competition area during the performance time once they have exited, until after the conclusion of the performance. Boundary line violations (including first aid cases) do not constitute leaving the competition area.

PENALTY: Five-tenths of a point (0.5) penalty for each participant failing to remain in the competition area for the designated time or returning after they have exited before the conclusion of the performance.

7.0 EXIT

7.1 Exit may be over any line at the conclusion of the performance.

7.2 All participants must exit the competition area through the designated exit door, tunnel, or ramp.

PENALTY: Five-tenths of a point (0.5) penalty per participant for failing to use the designated exit door, tunnel, or ramp

7.3 All personnel, equipment, and props must clear the vertical or horizontal centerline at the conclusion of the interval time. The timing line shall be for visual use by the Timing and Penalties judge and not designated by tape.

7.4 For purposes of timing, equipment and props are considered removed when they cross the vertical or horizontal centerline. After crossing the timing line, all equipment and props must continue to make forward progress out of the competition area promptly or receive a penalty at the discretion of the Timing and Penalty judge.

PENALTY: Three hundredths of a point (.03) per second for any timing violation.

7.5 There will be no flying of tarps (also known as "ballooning") to clear the floor at the conclusion of a competing group's performance.

PENALTY: Disqualification

8.0 PENALTIES

8.1 Timing and Penalty judges will assess all penalties for infractions in the competition area. Contest Administrators may not waive competition area penalties. The judge must document the reason, approximate location, and time for any penalty during the interval time for the group.

It is always the responsibility of the group representative to identify penalties post-performance. If the group representative fails to initiate a penalty inquiry with the Contest Director within fifteen (15) minutes of the penalty notification, the group will forfeit its right to any inquiry, and the penalty will be considered final and not subject to further review. The final two groups in any round or class must check in with the Timing and Penalty judge while exiting the competition area, as they may not have the full fifteen (15) minutes before final score submission

If an inquiry is requested, the Contest Director will consult with the Timing and Penalty judge to confirm the penalty details and respond to the group via text or arrange an in-person meeting, if necessary. No video recordings will be used during any inquiry. Once the inquiry is complete, the group representative will be notified via text of the final decision. The final determination on any penalty rests with the Timing and Penalty judge.

8.2 Any competing group violating any rule or part of a rule, breaching standard contest etiquette or failing to comply with directions from contest personnel for which no specific penalty is provided, shall be penalized for each such violation, not less than 0.1 point up to disqualification at the discretion of the Lead Judge, Contest Administrator, or the Director of Percussion.

8.3 All programs, soundtracks, thematic and costuming choices must reflect the qualities that would be acceptable for performance at a scholastic venue or suitable for marketing to sponsors on a national level.

8.4 Competing groups using the flag of the United States should follow the U.S. Flag Code. Directors are encouraged to contact the Director of Percussion for guidance prior to performance.

PENALTY: Denial of performance or possible disqualification as determined by the Director of Percussion in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer.

Percussion Timing & Penalty

Timing Requirements

	Minimum Performance Time	Maximum Performance Time	Maximum Interval Time
World Class	4 minutes	8 minutes	11 minutes
Open Class	3.5 minutes	7 minutes	10 minutes
A Class	3 minutes	6 minutes	9 minutes

Number of Performers

Minimum of 5 members

Minimum Performance Time

Total Performance Time _____

Total Undertime _____

Total Seconds Undertime _____ x 0.03 = _____

Maximum Performance Time

Total Performance Time _____

Total Overtime _____

Total Seconds Overtime _____ x 0.03 = _____

INTERVAL TIME – Total Time in Competition Area

Total Overall Time _____

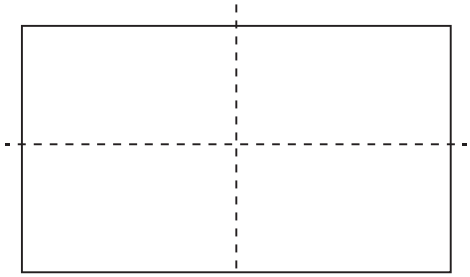
Total Overtime _____

Total Seconds Overtime _____ x 0.03 = _____

TOTAL SET UP TIME

Boundary Lines

Time in Show? Point of occurence? Who?



FRONT STAGE

Total *0.1 per occurence* _____

Penalty Summary

Minimum Performance Time _____

Maximum Performance Time _____

Total Time in Competition Area
Interval Time _____

Boundary Line _____

Unit, Equipment, Personnel _____

_____

_____

Other _____

Total

Approved _____
Chief Judge

JUDGE SIGNATURE _____

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Announcement Procedure

- Prior to the Group entering the floor to set up, the Timing and Penalty judge will announce the start of the interval time. During this time, music will be played through the PA system. The announcer will give the first announcement - *"Please welcome from (city and state/country), (name of the group).*

- As the group is setting up, the Timing and Penalty judge will periodically announce the setup time to the director. The Timing and Penalty judge will also monitor the judges to be sure they are ready for the start of the performance. During this time, music will be played through the PA system.

- If at any time the judges are not ready, the interval time will be suspended, and the group will be notified of the suspension of the interval time by the Timing and Penalty judge.

- If the group has any pre-show music, the house music will fade out at the start of the pre-show music.

- When the group is ready, the director will notify the Timing and Penalty judge and the Timing and Penalties judge will cue the announcer for the second announcement. The music will be faded out and the announcer will say: "*Performing their program (program title), WGI Sport of the Arts is proud to present (name of the group)."*

- At the conclusion of the performance, the announcer will say, "*(Name of the group) from (city and state/country), under the direction of (director's name)."* Music will fade in as the group leaves the floor. WGI announcers will make no other announcements.

- Groups must plan on the second announcement as part of their interval time.

ROUNDS AND SEEDING FOR PERFORMANCE ORDER AT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS PRELIMINARIES

Classes with twenty (20) or more groups will be seeded in "tournament-style" rounds for preliminary performance. Rounds will be seeded based on input from adjudicators and coordinated by the Director of Percussion. Once placed into a round, groups will be placed in reverse order of entry postmark date with the earliest postmark performing last. Identical postmark dates will draw for performance order.

Classes with nineteen (19) or less groups will perform in reverse order of entry postmark date. Identical postmark dates will draw for performance order.

A double panel of judges will judge all preliminaries.

If there is a performance scheduling conflict with another performing Group of the same school or organization at the world championships, the Group must notify the WGI office in writing no later than March 1 using the Championship Scheduling Conflict Form. Non-affiliated group or groups not traveling together may not necessarily be accommodated and must plan accordingly for stagehand assistance. This is entirely at the discretion of the Director of Percussion and/or the Chief Executive Officer. All scheduling consideration will accommodate prelims performances only.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS SEMI-FINALS

All World Class marching classes will have Semi-finals. A and Open Classes with more than forty (40) groups in preliminaries will have Semi-finals. A double panel of judges will judge all Semi-finals.

Total Entries in Prelims	Number to Semi-finals
20-34	20
35-49	24
50-64	32
65-80	40
81 or more	48

In the case of multiple preliminary contest sites, an equal amount from each contest site will be taken to make the total number of semi-finalists (for example, two contest sites and 40 semi-finalists, 20 will be taken from each preliminary contest site).

After preliminaries are completed, Semi-finalists will be placed in rounds. Performance order will be determined by reverse score order from the preliminary contest.

The Director of Percussion will have sole discretion, based on situations such as contest scheduling or judge availability, to add a Semi-finals contest to any class with fewer than forty (40) groups.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS FINALS

- All Percussion marching classes will have fifteen (15) finalists.
- Concert classes will advance up to twelve (12) groups per class.
- A double panel of judges will judge all Finals.

Performance order for all Finals contests using rounds in Semi-finals will utilize a wild card seeding process. Depending on the number of performing groups, the Director of Percussion has the discretion to choose an equal number from each round (top 3, top 4, top 5, etc.), and then add wild card groups to complete the designated number of finalists.

Performance order for all Finals contests not utilizing rounds in the event leading to Finals will be in reverse order of scores.

The Director of Percussion will have sole discretion, based on situations such as semi-finals performance times, to determine the performance order of classes in a Finals contest.

ROUNDS AND SEEDING FOR PERFORMANCE ORDER AT REGIONALS

REGIONAL PRELIMINARIES

Order of performance for all classes in all prelims will be determined by the postmark date of entry. The earlier the entry postmark, the later that Group will appear in the schedule. Groups sharing the same postmark date will be randomly drawn within that group with the same postmark date.

REGIONAL FINALS

The number of finalists at all Regionals shall be determined by the formula of 100% of World Class, 75% of Open Class and 50% of A Class percussion groups. Each Finals contest will accept a minimum of three (3) finalists in each class.

In cases where the number of finalists does not reach eight (8), the Director of Percussion has sole discretion to increase the number of finalists in any other class based on the total number of entries and time permitting. Each Finals contest will accept a minimum of three (3) finalists in each class.

In cases where applying the finalist percentages would eliminate only one (1) percussion Group, all would advance to Finals. The percentage is also rounded to the nearest whole number when determining the number of finalists.

Examples:

- *Six Open Class groups have entered a Regional. 75% of 6 equal 4.5 so the number of finalists would be rounded up to 5. However, this means only one Group would be eliminated so all six would be allowed to advance to finals.*
- *Seven Open Class groups have entered a Regional. 75% of 7 equal 5.25 so the number would be rounded down to 5. Since this means two groups would be eliminated, the provision of eliminating only one Group would not be applied.*

Order of appearance in Finals shall be determined by the reverse order of finish in prelims.

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