



CLASSIFICATION

Proposal #1

The Review Process of a units possible promotion by activated by the WGI Judging Panels. Any Unit competing in the following classes PSA, PIA, PSO, PIO and PSCO, shall be immediately reviewed by the WGI steering committee after receiving a Box 6 score in any caption at a sanctioned WGI Regional. The review process will take 5 days starting the Monday following the date the Box 6 score was achieved. The current Percussion Advisory Board will be notified via email of every unit under review as well as a result of the review process. If unit belonging to a steering committee member is under review, the WGI Percussion Coordinator will appoint a World Class Rep from the current Advisory Board to replace the steering committee member.

Submitted by Terry Sanders, Escambia HS

Rationale: The promotion/review process is still a work in progress. The lines between "A", "Open" and "World" are very gray. We trust our judges to always "Get It Right" so why do we not trust them to use the back of the sheet properly. If a WGI judge at a WGI sanctioned event scores a "A" or "Open" unit 97 in GE then that unit needs to be reviewed. Box 6 on the back of the sheet clearly states in resounding brevity: Class A & Open Class = Readiness for the next class. Any WGI Judge scoring as such is clearly telling the unit and the rest of the world, he or she thinks in no uncertain terms that this particular unit should be re-classified. This is how we (PAB) designed the back of the sheet to be used, so in all fairness to ourselves, lets use the tools we already have in place a little more wisely. The intention of this proposal is not to replace our current promotion process but to enhance our much needed growth in the World Class, and to help keep WGI Fair for all competing units.

Financial Impact: Provide Steering Committee members with WGI Fan Network accounts for the review process. This should have minimal/zero impact on WGI financially.

Proposal #2

WGI competing units should be forced to start and compete in the next classification for at least one (1) year following Consecutive First place titles. This would only apply to the Percussion A and Percussion Open Classes, Scholastic and Independent. This allows for the continuing growth and education of units and instructors as we move towards the future.

Submitted by Elanders Frazier, Pace HS

Rationale: Pacifica High School, a competing Percussion Scholastic Open Finalist has placed 1st in PSO for four (4) consecutive years, (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009). While this is a very distinguished honor among WGI competing groups, I fear as that the growth of the unit has halted. If we are not continuing to grow our performers from year to year what is the purpose of the activity? Each year presents a new challenge for each Unit, but so does a new classification. For competing units that have mastered the design and delivery of one classification, I believe that WGI has the responsibility to ensure that each group is striving to grow the performers from year to year. If a unit posts Box 6 scores, and is achieving a a first place decision year after year in the A and Open classes and have not moved to the next classification, I do not feel as an instructor and as a recent performer that they are being challenged. While the WGI administration would feel the necessity to move units that are achieving these new levels over the course of the season, I believe that units that are achieving these levels from year to year should not be overlooked. The WGI Colorguard Administration already have these rules set in place. I think that the WGI Percussion Administration should also evaluate these standards.

Financial Impact: N/A

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Proposal #3

Allow a staff member of an ensemble to control and adjust the amplification during a unit's performance.

Alternatively, allow for the use of hand signals from staff members to signal a member to adjust levels accordingly

Submitted by Jim Ancona, Penn State University

Rationale: This change would help improve the overall audience enjoyment at regionals and WGI Finals by minimizing the amount of performance issues due to amplification. This would also minimize the amount of groups that feel that their trip to Dayton was not worth it financially due to an amplification issue that hindered an otherwise finals-worthy performance. The staffs of most units are better equipped to prepare for the inherent acoustic differences in the UD Arena/Nutter Center vs. a high school gym than a performer with little to no experience controlling amplification in such a venue.

Alternatively, allowing for hand signals from staff to members during performances would allow the members to still be in control of the amplification, but receive guidance from their staff during a unit's performance. This would still alleviate many electronics problems and increase audience enjoyment as well as make the trip to finals feel more rewarding for many groups.

Financial Impact: There would be no direct cost to WGI to allow a staff member to control a unit's amplification. However, if WGI were to offer a monitor (or headset), so a staff member would hear what the judges here, there would be associated equipment costs at finals and each regional.

Proposal #4

At regional contests, have all concert and marching units perform within their classification.

Submitted by David Waters, Muscle Shoals HS

Rationale: At the regional events we have attended over the past 2 years, all concert percussion ensembles have been scheduled at the beginning of the contests regardless of classification. While lumping the concert groups together might make logistical sense, it allows sheets and skill sets to be out of order. It would be best to keep the sheets consistent throughout the competition day for the groups and the judges.

Having all the groups perform within their respective classification will put judging sheets and skill sets consistently in order throughout the entire contest.

Financial Impact: none

RULES

Proposal #5

The Independent Percussion classes to be determined by the average age of the players. Independent A – Average age 14-16, Open – 17-19 and World 20 -

Submitted by Terry Artis, Show-Me Sound F.O.C.U.S. DRUMLINE

Rationale: This will allow a more reasonable criteria for classification. A number of Independent A class ensembles don't fit the "Guide to A Class Lines" definition. Not even close. Tracking the growth of performers with level expectations based on age is like what is used in little league sports. This is the "Sport of the Arts."

Financial Impact: Ensembles getting involved at earlier stages and sustaining continuity. More feeder ensembles develop. Attracting more "new" ensembles into the arena. As it is, it would be more discouraging if they are competing with ensembles who are misclassified.

Proposal #6

Eliminate rule 5.2

Submitted by Mark Thurston, Percussion Coordinator

Rationale: Our yearly discussion about technology and its role in our activity.

Financial Impact: None.

Proposal #7

Change the penalty for undertime/overtime to .05 points per second.

Submitted by Mark Thurston, Percussion Coordinator

Rationale: The timing penalties need to be updated to conform to the percentage based system.

Financial Impact: None.

Proposal #8

Allow the Steering Committee to "clean up" the rulebook with approval from the PAB.

Submitted by Mark Thurston, Percussion Coordinator

Rationale: Most of the material in the "Percussion Contest Rules" portion of the rulebook is 15 years old. The activity has evolved so much since then. The definitions need to be looked at and brought up to date. This will be a process that will require some time.

Financial Impact: None.

[Proposal #9](#)

The use of pre-recorded rhythmic and/or music sound samples is prohibited. All sounds must be triggered by a performing ensemble member on a one stroke-one sound basis. Nothing herein shall prohibit the use of pre-recorded narration.

PENALTY: 10 Points

Submitted by Charles A. Poole, Jr., Everett HS

Rationale:

Sound Music Education Philosophy:

WGI employs a criteria referenced system of evaluation based upon the time-honored Five Steps in Learning (Experience, Discover, Know, Understand and Apply). Further, the Philosophy of WGI states that "we ascribe to the concept that artistic, aesthetic and creative standards are important, but inspiration must be balanced with the primary need of providing recognition and dignity for all participants." To allow pre-recorded music to be activated by a simple touch stroke undermines a most basic tenet of sound music education philosophy as the student/member has no engagement with the art of making music, nor is any musical training or cultivation required. Any competitive society that services public school students must promulgate rules that reward and focus on the achievement level of the student/musician and not the artificial machinations of a design team.

Adjudication Issues:

The use of pre-recorded music raises a host of issues relative to the fair, impartial and adequate assessment of an ensemble's performance. From a Percussion Analysis standpoint escalation of pre-recorded music will render performances that defy evaluation. In the area of composition to what degree should an adjudicator reward program passages with pre-recorded music? Should he or she credit the passage or discount it? Under current rules the WGI handbook states that the performance sheets will credit the performers' achievement of technical and expressive excellence. When the *performer* has no control over the musical output should it be treated as a tacit? Should more, less or the same credit be awarded to a marimba feature with minor technical deficiencies as pre-recorded music with its inherent excellence? Further complicating the matter is the fact that the performance judges are not in a position to determine what is live or recorded performance. Finally, taken to the extreme, a unit may devise a program in which the entire melodic content is pre-recorded. There would surely be consensus that the absence of pit percussion should be taken into account in the evaluation process. Yet, what of the units that employ the technique 10%, 20% or 25% of the show?

The Level Playing Field:

Competitive rules and regulations fulfill two primary purposes: to establish the criteria and the numerical weight assigned for a variety of evaluative considerations and to define the parameters of the contest to assure competitive equity. With regard to the second, legal instruments and competitive area rules have been debated and largely resolved over time. As a matter of history, in the late 1990's a scholastic world unit was disqualified at Championships for using a pre-recorded synthesizer track. The rationale for this harshest of penalties was that it created an unfair competitive advantage for the offending unit and was enforced to preserve the integrity of the contest. The contention herein is that the same operative rationale exists for banning the use of pre-recorded music today. At the heart of this argument rests the question of what is truly important in our activity. Is WGI at its core the vehicle for designers to formulate programs on an unrestricted basis at the expense of

fairness to the member participants? Is equity for the student performers served when one unit is placed in a position of competing against another utilizing the work product of professional musicians? Can performer generated music be expected to compare favorably with pristine sound of manufactured music? Clearly, the position herein is that from a purely competitive framework, the programs experienced by the audience and the adjudicator should be produced by the performers on the floor in order to maintain the level playing field.

One school of thought holds that the natural evolution of the activity demands the creative freedom to embrace pre-recorded music. If the forum were percussive theater or an exhibition format, then there might be credence in the argument. However, as long as the activity remains a competitive event, reasonable restrictions must ensue to provide every ensemble an equal opportunity for success. Furthermore, WGI has been at the vanguard of encouraging creativity through the liberal allowance of electronics in programming. Through the synthesizer, malletkat, drumkat, guitar and bass guitar a full orchestral, percussive and special effect palette of sounds are available to designers to be performed on a "live" basis.

Financial Impact: None

Proposal #10

Proposal to Remove WGI's Independent World Class Age Limit

Submitted by Craig Dunn, Rhythm X; Director

Rationale: Everyone involved in WGI shares a passion for the activity. Hard work and long hours make each season something very special, year after year. WGI Independent Percussion ensembles consistently innovate and push the activity, and all of its related art forms, at a growing rate.

Yet despite all the activity does to foster growth and innovation in marching percussion, an age-out rule eliminates, every April without fail, one of the activity's most valuable assets: experienced, passionate performers.

Eliminating the age rule has been proposed before. In fact, we are used to hearing several arguments supporting the current age-out rule. The most popular argument is the desire to preserve WGI as a youth activity. This is a matter of personal preference, as WGI's own mission statement makes absolutely no mention of a desired or intended age-based culture. It reads "WGI Sport of the Arts exists to foster positive experiences for all who participate, by promoting education, creativity and freedom of expression through the unification of pageantry and the performing arts."

Simply put, WGI is about providing an experience through art regardless of age, race, gender, or any other orientation.

It is also important to consider the existing culture in Independent World class groups. Approximately 90% of members in the top six Independent World ensembles are at least 18 years of age, which means they are either enrolled in college or have entered the workforce. But even more importantly, it means they are legal adults.

These post-high-school environments are not bound by any age restriction, nor can they be accurately described as exclusively youth oriented. Put another way, most members of Independent World ensembles have already transitioned away from youth cultures and are now living in an adult oriented environment. The argument that the culture of Independent World Lines is exclusively youth-oriented is inaccurate in 2009.

Another popular argument is that groups will be overrun by older members. International ensembles such as Aimachi testify that groups without age restrictions are not overrun by older members and do not dramatically stifle the current culture. In his eight months with Aimachi, Chris Leone (member 2007-2008) can only recall positive experiences and observations associated with having a diverse age group. Being able to not only instruct, but also perform with younger members fostered a very positive and effective educational environment. Also, despite the age diversity, the culture within the ensemble was not unlike anything he had personally experienced in American ensembles bound by an age limit.

Another very important reality is the physical rigors demanded by the activity at the top level. If current productions already push performers to their limits, both musically and physically, there will not be many older members who can physically keep up. This alone will limit participation to those in their physical prime or close to it.

Some observe that professional percussion opportunities exist once a performer has aged out of WGI. While there is no denying this, it is important to recognize the indoor percussion art form as an activity that requires unique skills and performance abilities to produce a unique result. One would not throw away Monet's brushes and paints and tell him to make do with Photoshop.

Another concern is there would be a shortage of instructors without an age out rule, implying instructing is the next logical step after aging out. However, an educator who is not passionate about teaching does not remain an educator for long. If someone wants to teach, they make the choice to do so, as should a member whose heart lies in performing.

One last argument we often hear is that it's time for members to "move on." This implies that the marching activity is somehow a developmental hindrance.

Because rehearsals take place only on weekends, WGI ensembles are able to provide a high quality recreational outlet to full-time professionals and educators who are still eager to perform in the indoor marching activity but are still focused on developing their careers. Other international groups, composed almost exclusively of full-time students and professionals, manage to lead career driven lifestyles while still committing to their ensembles.

Similarly, Wayne Gibson, section leader of Rhythm X's pit in 2009, worked full time as an engineer at a nuclear power plant in southern Maryland and still managed to fulfill his responsibilities to the ensemble. International members and people like Wayne choose to march because they are passionate about participating in WGI.

Finding true happiness and passion in something we do is nothing short of a gift and it should never be forcefully taken away from anyone. Period.

Indoor percussion on the whole will benefit in many ways from an all-age class.

First, and most obvious, will be the overall increase in talent among groups. Members are only beginning to peak when they age out. By giving them the opportunity to return, we are welcoming back our activity's most talented and experienced performers who can continue to set the example for younger, less-experienced members. As a result, overall participation will increase. Groups that struggle to fill membership will have access to a much larger talent pool, and new organizations will have a greater chance of success. Also, having more groups will open more doors for less experienced members looking for an opportunity to perform and learn.

Finally, a practical point: organizations run on money, not love. Financial obstacles are omnipresent. By opening the doors to older performers, who are more likely to be employed full time, organizations will have better financial prospects leading to more financially stable organizations.

In any activity or organization that evolves remarkably from one year to the next, it is important that those in charge don't suppress growth. WGI's world-class performers are the best the marching percussion activity has to offer. They are ambassadors of the art. They push the activity year after year, they set the example, and they are mentors to younger members. That being said, groups will still have full discretion over the culture they choose to foster within their organization and who they choose to invite into it. With the elimination of the age rule, groups are simply provided the option to tap into a larger resource pool.

Every WGI performer is very fortunate to have found a passion that fuels a determination to be great. Without fail, the activity continues to bring out the best in people season after season in an environment so special and unique that it's nearly impossible to duplicate. Giving everyone the option with the ability, talent and passion to continue performing would only be a positive step forward for everyone involved.

It was the student's passion that pushed them to work hard, practice incessantly, make sacrifices, and push themselves through walls to perform at such a high level. They have earned the right to choose, for themselves, when it is time to walk away from an activity they have come to love so well.

Financial Impact: Organizations with members employed full time will have better financial prospects potentially leading to more financially stable organizations. Increasing eligibility could potentially lead to more competitive groups in the WGI circuit.