

**Percussion Advisory Board
June 6-7, 2025
Las Vegas, Nevada
Proposals for Consideration**



WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Proposal #1

Randomize Performance Order For Semis

Submitted by TJ Choquette, Atlanta Quest (PIW)

Rationale: One judge's score can impact your group and their experience substantially - it can come at any time, but it's the most impactful during finals week. For most groups, prelims is the most important run of the season competitively. It extends your season, or positions you in a spot that can effectively "lock" you into finals. For others, they are eliminated or positioned in a performance-order spot where moving up the ladder to the top-15 (or whatever their goal is) becomes difficult. Whether it's a judging anomaly or maybe your group went on first out of 40+ groups on prelims day, your score and placement may be lower than you'd like and it's an uphill battle from there.

I propose a randomized performance order for semis, and think it accomplishes a few things: 1. Protects from a judging anomaly or prelims performance order from disproportionately affecting your future outcomes, 2. It prevents from implicit bias of yesterday's placement being your "starting point" of evaluation from semis judges, 3. It allows semis judges to have a "fresh read" like prelims, but also gives them ability to still see it a second time on finals and adjust as needed, when looking back-to-back with direct competition.

I think this allows WGI more of the "any given night" mentality rewarding excellence without implicit bias of prior placement, while also giving groups their earned reward of going on in reverse order of score on finals night.

It's worth discussing with the board whether it's fully randomized or in "buckets". For instance, for 20-group semis could be 1-4, 5-8, 9-12, 13-16, 17-20 or 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20 or 1-6, 7-13, 14-20, etc. I think either would be an improvement.

Financial Impact: none

Proposal #2

For WGI championships at UD Arena, move the effect visual and visual judges to a higher location. Use the centrally located red club seats above sections 218 and 219, the empty space next to those central club seats, and use top few rows of sections 218 and 219.

Submitted by Richard Hinshaw, Avon HS (PSW)

Rationale: Effect visual and visual judges need to be able to see more of an ensemble's production to best adjudicate their efforts. The current seating locations for these judges at UD prevents the judges from seeing floor designs, from seeing all layers of depth and coordination in a visual design, and it obscures many of the layered visual efforts performed by all of the students. Moving these locations higher will not prevent judges

from seeing visual details and expressive qualities, and it will give judges a better perspective on every ensemble's total visual achievement.

Financial Impact: None. Seats that are being used for VIP packages in these higher locations can be shifted to the lower locations where the effect visual and visual judges currently sit. By using the centrally located red club seats and the empty space next to them, there could be a net gain in VIP seats sold when using the seats the judges currently occupy in sections 218 and 219.

Proposal #3

Rent or purchase acoustic carpet panels for the UD

Submitted by John Mapes, Pulse Percussion (PIW)

Rationale: The acoustics of the UD specifically have changed post renovation and affected the sound in a negative way compared to the glory days of 2017 and before :(We recently had some carpet panels added to our finals venues for SCPA that made a significant difference to the overall sound in a very tough acoustic room. The panels are thin and do not affect the ability to roll props. It would be incredible if we could try it out for WGI finals to see if it made a difference in the sound. Other benefits could be for the winds division as well!

Financial Impact: Renting seems ideal if possible to test it out. Cost is unknown at this time, but this would be up to the board to figure out if we can make it happen.

ADJUDICATION

Proposal #4

Update the point allocations for marching percussion captions to be the following:

Effect-Music = 30%

Overall Effect = 12% (cur. 15%)

Music Effect = 18% (cur. 15%)

Effect- Visual = 20%

Overall Effect = 12% (cur.10%)

Visual Effect = 8% (cur. 10%)

Music = 30%

Composition = 12% (cur.10%)

Performance Quality = 18% (cur. 20%)

Visual = 20%

Composition = 8% (cur. 10%)

Performance Quality = 12% (cur.10%)

Submitted by Percussion Steering Committee,

Rationale: This proposal refines the structure of the scoring system to better reflect the philosophical balance already in place within our division. The Music and Visual captions would adopt a parallel weighting-

40% Composition and 60% Performance Quality-mirroring the framework used on the Concert Percussion sheets and within our Music caption, where demonstrated performance excellence carries more relative weight than composition.

The Effect captions are also updated to give equal weight to the "Overall Effect" sub-caption in both Effect-Music and Effect-Visual while preserving the intended 60/40 split between music and visual attributes. These adjustments help align the scoring model more closely across captions and classes.

Financial Impact: None

Proposal #5

Task the steering committee to develop and then trial a new scoring system where the scoresheet considerations are broken down into four scores instead of two scores. Using the visual scoresheet as an example, the current Composition score could be split into ‘Spatial Design’ and ‘Physical Composition.’ The Performance Quality score could be split into ‘Uniformity’ and ‘Skill & Artistry.’ The breakdown and verbiage of the new scoring system would need to be developed, but at PAB I’m happy to present options of what that could look like.

Submitted by Rochelle Mapes, Pulse Percussion (PIW)

Rationale: A score is a comment. But, when one number covers many criteria, it can be difficult to disseminate how points are credited or deducted. Splitting two sub captions into four sub captions would provide:

- Clarity for competitors to better understand strengths and areas for improvement
- Accountability and objectivity for judges to assess all considerations on the scoresheet
- Dividing the sub captions may also benefit the issue of ‘running out of space’ for scores in finals as inherently, when there are more scores to separate, there will be more deductions thus resulting in lower scores. This could help re-calibrate the system which is currently running out of records to break.

Financial Impact: There is a potential cost of paying judges to trial the new scoresheets as a secondary panel.

Proposal #6

Enhancing Clarity and Fairness in WGI Percussion Judging Sheets

Submitted by Jake Euler, Rise Percussion (PIW)

Rationale: This proposal recommends refining the existing WGI Percussion judging sheets by incorporating clearer scoring language, more descriptive rubric criteria, and defined sub-ranges within each scoring box—while keeping the current caption and point structure intact.

These enhancements will help judges, performers, and instructors better understand what drives scoring decisions and how to plan, perform, and grow more effectively.

Currently, the WGI Percussion score sheets use general terms and broad ranges that leave room for inconsistent interpretation. Unlike the more detailed Guard sheets, the percussion sheets lack:

- Defined differences between the low, mid, and high ends of each scoring box

- Specific examples of what performance qualities justify certain scores
- Clear rubric criteria to support judge feedback and performer understanding

By adding more precise language and sub-range descriptions under the existing descriptors (i.e. Program, Creativity, Communication, Engagement, Coordination, and Range of Effects, etc), this proposal:

- Improves scoring transparency
- Clarifies judge intent and feedback
- Encourages consistent scoring practices across all panels and regions
- Helps performers and educators understand exactly how to improve

Additionally, this reduces overreliance on "spread-based" scoring (where scores are influenced by other ensembles' placements), and instead encourages achievement-based scoring, allowing groups to be assessed more on their own merit.

Benefits to the Community at All Levels:

For Performers:

- Scores and feedback become more meaningful and actionable
- Students gain clear goals and benchmarks for excellence
- Better reinforcement of educational outcomes in the ensemble experience

For Instructors & Designers:

- More detailed rubrics support stronger show planning and training priorities
- Clearer understanding of how to achieve competitive growth from season to season

For Judges:

- Better tools to justify and explain scoring decisions
- Improved consistency between judges and across events
- Easier critique conversations with staff and performers

For the Activity as a Whole:

- Supports greater parity between the percussion and guard divisions
- Encourages educational and competitive fairness, especially for new or developing programs

Conclusion:

This proposal strengthens WGI Percussion by making judging criteria more transparent, educational, and consistent—without overhauling the current system. It benefits all levels of the community, from performers and instructors to judges and adjudicators, and brings percussion scoring practices more in line with the proven, detailed systems used in other divisions.

Financial Impact: Minimal cost: Only involves time for judge input, updating language on current sheets, and some small graphic design work. No change to judging structure: Captions, boxes, and scoring systems remain the same. Easily integrated into judge training and education materials.

Proposal #7

Create review protocol for same-caption judge discrepancies of 8+ percentage points

Submitted by TJ Choquette, Atlanta Quest (PIW)

Rationale: Judging is very difficult - especially in Dayton when evaluating 30+ groups at one time. The process will never be perfect, and there is always going to be some subjectivity in the nature of how scores are derived. WGI does a solid job of trying to diversify panels in finals with judges that don't come from the same background. I think that diversity and the variance in scores that stem from it are generally good things and help create, on average, a reasonably fair "mid-point" for your score. However, there are times when scores from double-panels inside the same caption are too large to reasonably reconcile. That's when there needs to be an official review process instituted. One judging anomaly, particularly in a music-oriented caption with 30 pts of your total score, can do severe harm to total score. It can change total placement by 2-3+ positions, and affect how a group might progress across finals week.

I propose we enforce an official review protocol for sub-caption spreads between judges of 8 percentage points or more. This stems from WGI's own "Sub-Caption Spreads" policy, which states 8+ points between groups suggest "Significant Differences" between them. If two trained judges in the same caption think a group is significantly different from itself, it should be reviewed and discussed.

This stems from a specific example this year in PIW where caption spreads were 94.5/96 and 85/83.5. Ordinal wise, that is both 3rd and 24th out of 30 groups. Other examples across classes are 70/71 & 86/85, 76/78 & 95/93, 74/76 & 88/89. In my opinion, that shouldn't be possible.

The Olympics across multiple events, NCAA gymnastics, NFL/MLB/NBA/EPL all have official review processes, and we should too. I'll leave the other committees to officially create the policy, but I suggest the two judges along with the "head judge" from that contest confer to see if there's some considerations missed or forgotten about. No one is mandated to change, but maybe a chat and review will prevent some of these anomalies from occurring and wildly altering finals week experiences for members.

Financial Impact: None

Proposal #8

Hire a Percussion Visual Specialist Administrator

Submitted by John Mapes, Pulse Percussion (PIW)

Rationale: The percussion activity has quickly evolved on the visual side in the past decade, especially since the addition of Effect Visual in 2016. With the increased visual role in percussion shows, having a dedicated visual admin would better support and guide judges, instructors, and designers in this area. The idea would be to have an additional admin added to the current three that could be a consistent visual resource.

Possible roles:

- Work along side the judge coordinator to represent and further develop the visual captions
- Attend Steering committee and Advisory Board meetings
- Help run the judges training and weekly meetings
- Work along side the education coordinator to produce more visual specific educational content
- Be a direct resource for instructors and designers

In order for this to happen we would need the funding and the right person for the job. It would be up to the Board of Directors and Percussion Director to determine when to implement as to not rush the process.

Financial Impact: Costs would parallel the education coordinator position and be up to the board for approval

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Proposal #9

Allow the Steering Committee to offer proposals at the advisory board meetings regardless of proposal deadlines.

Submitted by Kevin Shah, Broken City (PIW)

Rationale: Should the community identify a needed systems change during the process of our annual meetings, currently we would have to table any proposals till the next season. The proposals would be treated as any other proposal and would require passage by currently published rules and review by the Board of Directors for any financial impact.

Financial Impact: None

RULES

Proposal #10

Tiered Age-Out Rule Based on Classification

Submitted by Jake Euler, Rise Percussion (PIW)

Rationale: This proposal recommends the adoption of a tiered age-out rule for WGI Independent Percussion Ensembles based on classification. Specifically, it would extend the maximum age to 25 years old (as of March 31st) for World Class participants. This change would provide more equitable access to performers, clarify participation parameters for ensembles, support educational and professional balance for members, and increase stability in ensemble development. Notably, WGI successfully piloted a 25-year-old age-out limit in 2022 to accommodate COVID-era losses—with no discernible negative impact on staffing or education across the activity.

Proposed Age Limits by Classification:

- Independent A Class- 21
- Independent Open Class- 23
- Independent World Class- 25
- Scholastic Classes- Governed by student enrollment status

Rationale & Benefits:

1. Performer-Centered Flexibility and Opportunity

Academic Conflicts Resolved: Performers should not be forced to choose between completing a college degree and participating in a final competitive season. Extending the age-out limit to 25 gives performers more flexibility to finish school while still engaging with the WGI community.

Post-Graduation Inclusion: Not all performers follow the same timeline. This rule enables students entering the activity later, or returning after a break, to still experience their age-out season without being rushed out of the system prematurely.

Gradual Development: A tiered system gives performers a more natural progression through A, Open, and World Classes, better aligning with their technical, physical, and emotional growth.

2. Strengthened Ensemble Sustainability & Staffing

Veteran Leadership Within Ensembles: Older performers (22–25) bring leadership, maturity, and consistency. Their presence strengthens culture, supports retention, and provides mentorship to younger members.

No Negative Impact on Staffing: During the 2022 season, WGI temporarily raised the age-out limit to 25 due to COVID-19 disruptions. There was no reported shortage of staff or decline in instructional quality—debunking the long-standing myth that raising the age cap reduces the educator pool. In fact, the inclusion of more mature performers contributed to some of the most impressive and high-level ensembles in recent memory, strengthening the activity across the board.

More Mature Members = Better Ensembles: In 2022, the top-tier Independent ensembles greatly benefited from the inclusion of more mature performers, who brought higher levels of technical proficiency, leadership, and artistry. This directly translated into some of the strongest groups seen in years, setting a new standard of excellence for the entire activity. (Including a PIW high score record that would not be broken until 2025) The inclusion of older performers helped create a ripple effect of higher quality performances and more competitive fields across the Independent division.

Freedom to Set Minimum Age: World Class groups could more feasibly choose to define a minimum participation age, giving them increased control over liability and ensemble dynamics. This reduces legal risk when housing and traveling with minors.

3. Equity Across Independent Ensembles

Support for Smaller or Rural Ensembles: Groups with limited access to performers (due to geography or local education systems) would be able to retain experienced members longer, increasing their competitiveness and ensemble viability.

Inclusivity for Late Bloomers and Non-Traditional Paths: This rule supports those who begin marching later or return after life events (e.g., military service, financial hardship). It promotes a more inclusive and accessible WGI experience.

4. Artistic and Emotional Fulfillment

Creative and Emotional Closure: Marching arts offer deep personal meaning for many performers. Extending age eligibility ensures more people can complete their journey and reach emotional and artistic goals.

Avoiding Burnout: Performers no longer have to cram their full WGI experience into a short window. A longer eligibility timeline allows for healthier pacing and better work-life balance.

Conclusion:

WGI has already proven that raising the age-out limit to 25 is feasible, successful, and sustainable. The 2022 season, where this age limit was temporarily enacted, demonstrated that more mature performers contributed to some of the highest-level performances in recent memory. By adopting this tiered system, WGI can better serve performers, strengthen the health of Independent ensembles, and evolve with the modern demands of education, equity, and safety.

This proposal builds a system that is clear, inclusive, and future-forward—matching the standards of excellence and education that WGI represents.

Financial Impact: There is minimal financial impact to WGI or ensembles. This change:

- Does not require new adjudication, infrastructure, or class realignment.
- Requires only a revision of eligibility policy language.
- Could actually increase participation, especially in World Class, leading to higher membership and audience engagement across events.

Proposal #11

The creation of a new class between Open Class and World Class.

Submitted by Joshua Hendley, Horizon Percussion (PIA)

Rationale: The current guide of the three classes describes them as basic concepts & skills, intermediate concepts & skills, and advanced concepts & skills. The creation of the new class would keep those three distinctions for the bottom three classes, but change World Class to innovative concepts & exceptional skills.

This description already describes what the upper bracket of World Class seems to be aiming for. It seems unreasonable that the lower World Class ensembles are competing with the upper World Class ensembles, the differences are so vast and they really should not be in the same classification. However, those lower world class ensembles are clearly still using advanced skills & concepts, so they don't belong in Open Class either.

The creation of this class would take the lower part of World Class and the upper part of Open Class and put them in this new class to compete. Many of the upper Open Class ensembles are at the level where they could be judged by their use of advanced skills and concepts. This would additionally allow Open Class and World Class to be less packed and over-populated with ensembles, allowing for increased judging accuracy, improved education for the students, and improved payoffs for more ensembles making finals in their respective classes.

Financial Impact: The main financial impact I could see in the creation of a new class would be balancing the world championships schedule, especially with making sure there is space and time for the ensembles to perform. Although it would not have more ensembles than previous, it would require another class finals to occur.

Proposal #12

Change the interval timing penalty amount from .05 a second to either .025 a second or .05 for every 2 seconds to keep the numbers clean.

Submitted by John Mapes, Pulse Percussion (PIW)

Rationale: Having interval timing penalties are important for the flow of the show, but the current amount penalizes more severely compared to other penalties. For example, going 10 seconds over the limit is a .5 deduction and 30 seconds being a full 1.5 penalty, yet a boundary infraction is only a tenth.

Most timing penalties that happen at the end of the season when it matters the most happen because of electronic issues that are typically out of the group's control. Since there could be fairness and subjectivity issues with a calamity clause or allowing wiggle room for timing penalties, minimizing the penalty amount would be the most equitable choice.

Financial Impact: None

Proposal #13

Groups may not begin a preshow until their interval time has started.

Submitted by Percussion Steering Committee,

Rationale: This proposal promotes equitable treatment of all performing groups by ensuring that each has full, uninterrupted use of its designated interval time. Audible preshows that begin early, however unintentional, can intrude on another group's time and disrupt the flow of the event.

Financial Impact: None

Proposal #14

Require a warning or ban on strobe lights

Submitted by Robert Vilag, Lake Effect Percussion (PIA)

Rationale: One of my students started having seizure symptoms due to flashing lights during this years World Championships. With many people in the audience, we should take into account something that can cause a medical episode pausing the competition. We had lights in our performance that changed slowly with no issues for them so it was specifically the rapid strobe effects.**Financial Impact:** zero

Financial Impact: zero