

Abbreviated 2025 WGI Color Guard Steering Committee Report

Outlining Changes from 2025 to 2026

About this Document-

This document is an abbreviated version of the full Steering Committee Report that shows only the changes from the 2025 Season to the 2026 Season. It is a surface approach for those with no interest in context or other discussion from the meeting. For more meaningful information, please see the full report.

CHANGES AND CLARIFICATIONS-

Items forwarded, for clarification, to the committee from the Board of Directors-

Proposal #3-

This proposal establishes guidelines for determining the number of rounds at any contest with a focus on creating smaller numbers of units in each round.

The committee recommends, we follow the solution presented in the proposal...

- Any time rounds are judged by separate panels, we will create an even number of rounds to balance the contests. This will happen by rounding up to the next number of rounds in order to honor the intent of keeping rounds smaller.

We were then asked how units should progress through qualifying rounds in these scenarios.

The committee recommends, we honor the agreements presented during the A and Open Caucus...

- When progressing into the next round of competition over multi-paneled contests, the highest scores across all rounds will progress into the next qualifying round.

Proposal #22 –

This proposal considers tied units from Prelims progressing forward into Semi-Finals. The proposal requires that tied units from Prelims go on in the same performance position in separate rounds, instead of back-to-back in the same round. (The back-to-back policy caused imbalanced rounds at championships in 2025, especially in instances of 3-way ties.)

We were asked how the initial tie is broken and how to determine who goes on in an earlier vs. later round. It's important to know that all units are assigned, by computer, a random number for each contest. In the past, this was used to break ties in lieu of a coin flip.

The committee recommends ...

- Computer generated assignment of numbers for each contest, will remain in place for all classes.

- In a tied situation, the group with the lowest number goes on later. This is consistent with how order was determined in 2025's back-to-back situations.

Other Scheduling Considerations –

Concrete finish time for Regionals

We have grown into situations where it is common for Sunday Regional Finals to extend to and past 5:00PM. For 2026, WGI is creating a concrete finish time of 4:30PM.

We have a policy that requires percentages of units to move into Finals. (100% of Worlds, 75% of Opens, 50% of A groups). At larger Regionals, about 5, these percentages force Finals beyond the 4:30 target.

The committee was asked, how should percentages be adjusted in order meet the 4:30 target in these larger contests?

The committee recommends ...

- When possible, the original percentages should be honored.
- When needed, Dale and those that work on finalizing schedules will negotiate these percentages upon close of registration, once the number of groups in each class for Prelims is established.
- We currently have a policy where we do not cut just one group from one qualifying round to the next. Cutting numbers requires at least 2 groups that do not progress. The Steering Committee asks that this policy remain in place as we consider these scheduling adjustments.
- New wording...

“For two-day Regional+ events, the standard regional finalist formula (100% World, 75% Open, 50% A) will be utilized unless the total number of finalists exceeds 40 groups. If the total number of finalists exceeds 40 groups, WGI will adjust the formula.”

Review of Judge Sheet changes from 2025 and needs to adjust for 2026- (for more detail on each item, see full report)

World Class Descriptors of Class Standards (top of sheet)-

For 2026 we will adjust both World Class Sheets to:

“Advanced to Virtuosoic”

- This better reflects the realities of some of the eventual finalists into those classes.
 - We expect to revisit and adjust this descriptor as abilities in these classes grow.

- Groups will still be judged based on the proofs they offer. This is not a loophole into disproportionate reward.
- *Standard-setting* was eventually dropped, as a stated class standard, with the elimination of Box 6 (see below)
- We did not see that percentages in the A and Open Classes required adjustments to the 2025 descriptors.
 - *A - Intermediate*
 - *Open - Advanced*

Craftsmanship on all sheets-

For 2026 - No adjustment from 2025

Safety and Compatibility-

For 2026 - No adjustment from 2025

Risk on all World Class sheets-

For 2026 - No adjustment from 2025

The World Class intent is in acknowledging that risk can be defined by the exceptional abilities of World Class performers

Risk is cumulative and not an expectation of every count. Risk is simply another tool in the compositional, programmatic, choreographic, and performance kits.

Completion of Skills –

For 2026 - No adjustment from 2025

Other Items related to scoring and or judging

Allow Judges to hold the first 2 rounds at Regionals and Championships

This allows judges to better reflect the performances by anchoring their numbers. This also allows for more accurate placements not only inside the 2 rounds but also in the next rounds of competition.

“Get it right” vs. “Get it right now”

This will require a small adjustment to the 90-minute guideline for issuing scores.

Raise the Open Class and World Class minimum qualifying score for Finals

For 2026 we will increase the qualifying score by 5 points.

New Formula:

The Minimum qualifying score for the last regional weekend would be a 65.00, with scores diminished by 1.5 each weekend prior.

For 2026

- Week 1 - 56.00
- Week 2 - 57.50
- Week 3 – 59.00
- Week 4 – 60.50
- Week 5 – 62.00
- Week 6 - 63.50
- Week 7 – 65.00

Scholastic classes still maintain the rating system.

For 2026 - Eliminate Box 6 on World Class Sheets

This has been on the horizon for several years.

- Training for Box 6 “New Standards” has been limited without the ability to access historic and current videos
- We debated the effect of box 6 limiting the numeric range of Box 5 and perhaps causing lower scores in recent years in some cases
- The committee will continue to revisit this issue over the next years (starting in 2028) as resources change and units progress into new standards with and without a box 6 incentive and acknowledgement.
 - This may cause an eventual shift in the wording of Box 5 or a redevelopment of the idea of Box 6.

In 2026 we will shift descriptors and structure of Box 5 on all World Class sheets.

- Because of the elimination of Box 6, the numeric range of Box 5 will be expanded from “90 to 98” to “90 to 100”
- Delineation of Box thirds in Box 5 will be eliminated.
- Descriptors typically defined by those thirds will be consolidated into, “Some to All”.
- This opening of box 5 creates an opportunity, once a group enters box 5, for the scoring priorities of profiling and spreading to be truly reflective of the units, from a comparative standpoint. This happens without a potential compromise created by squeezing groups into separate criteria defined inside box thirds. If merited, this should allow for a freedom for groups to move up in the numeric range assigned to the box.

Judge Commentary

Focus of Performance Commentary vs. Critique Conversations

It’s important to inform, acknowledge, and remind all parties:

- Performance commentary happens as units perform in scheduled order. This limits group-to-group comparative comments, because the total picture is unavailable to the judge until the last unit has performed. Any comparative points in this context would not be honest reflection, but simple speculation.
- **Performance commentary** should focus on the unit as **compared to the class standard**.
- **Critique conversations** are guided first by the instructor. The judge can/should include reflections on the unit as **compared to its competitors** in that show.
 - Typically starting at mid-season, points comparing the unit to the total field of Championships competitors can be discussed. ...Always with the qualifier that this is not the same weekend and groups do not progress at the same rate. ...This is not a promise ring!

JUDGE ITEMS FOR 2026 (See Full Report for this section and others)

Thank You

-Karl Lowe

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