



WGI COLOR GUARD VIRTUAL
ADJUDICATION MANUAL & RULEBOOK



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 guards, percussion ensembles, 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 imbalance. 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 between 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 JUDGING

TEACHER - COUNSELOR – CRITIC/PATRON

Judges are extremely close to the color guards they adjudicate, especially at a local level. They share in their growth and they take on the responsibility of giving them input for improvement. Sometimes judges talk directly to the performers and try to help them understand what is being asked of them. Unlike athletic referees or umpires, unlike the international championship judges, they are not isolated from the competitors they score. This fact brings us to take a long hard look at why they are judges.

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

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

Clinics, seminars and proper study can teach the judge how to rank and rate. Examinations can determine technical skills. But there are other qualities just as important. Communication skills are essential. They communicate to the color guards in everything they do: the recorded commentary, any post-show follow-up and just casual conversation with instructors carries 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.

A judge functions on three levels. Guards with young inexperienced instructors require them to be teachers. With color guards at this level, they will find many times when commentary will be clinics in basic technique. This must be done with patience setting a logical progression of development for the students to follow. They 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 judges were some 10 or 15 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 Regional and Championship levels, commentary is focused on scoring relevance. Any advice to the instructor or students in terms of a "mini clinic" should be limited to the wrap up and saved for the one-on-one conversations in critique. Judges must make sure that the comparative and adjustment process is given the time necessary, with extended "advice" to the instructor taking a lower priority.

At the second level they deal with color guards 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 they find themselves in the role of "counselor". This role requires the most patience, the strongest concern and the greatest amount of effort.

It's hard to watch color guards at this level stumble and make mistakes. We encounter their impatience, their frustrations, and their absolute conviction that they are misunderstood and not appreciated. There could be some rough, heated moments during this time.

Finally, the student really does grow up and they see moments of brilliance emerge from his/her creations and one day they have it all together and in terms of creation, has surpassed the teacher, outgrown the counselor, and looked

to them to be the art critic and patron (for surely, this is a work of art). At this point, they must challenge them; encourage them to set even higher goals and standards. They must be professional, concerned, and supportive.

The beginning judge should not enter the arena expecting to be all 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 of marching. There will be a thousand tests - technical, personal, emotional, intellectual. You will be expected to endure them all. You are there because you are bright, you are willing, and you care a great deal.

Align your involvement with the young beginning guards. 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.

Our idiom has always demanded total commitment. Superior performers always give 100%. Superior judges must also give 100%. As judges, our disciplines and attitudes must be an extension of those of the performers. Judges expect the performers to be professional -- so must they be professional. Judges expect to be respected -- so must they respect the performers. Judges demand no less of themselves than is demanded of each performer.

A great teacher continually learns from their students; a great judge continually learns from the "instructors". Communication is a two-way street. Good color guards and good judges grow together by helping one another, by keeping communication lines open, and by setting mutual goals and standards for the activity.

Judges must judge with their head, with an empathetic heart, and in a positive, nurturing, and challenging manner as they contribute to the growth and development of this unique activity, and its' very special performers and designers!

Judges should...

Encourage the A Class guards
Appreciate the Open Class guards
Learn from the World Class guards

THE COMPETITIVE GUARD AND SCORING

A partnership among designers, performers & judges

How Does Competition Benefit Us?

- It sets a standard against which we can measure growth
- It motivates the participants to strive for higher achievement
- It prepares the students for the competitive/comparative challenges found in life

Classification: Understanding Each Class and Their Differences

Proper classification is essential if we are to have a level playing field for all participants. There are five classes or levels of maturity for the guards to enter. Many local areas will have multiple sub-divisions within the Regional A and A Classes. They divide those large classes to provide a more equitable distribution of groups at a similar developmental level. These sub-divisions are all judged on the sheet that is appropriate for their level.

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

Color guards should make every effort to compete in the class for which they are most suited. Guards who may be competing in the wrong class could find that the scoring process will isolate them because this criterion is so strongly attuned to the curriculum involved in the developmental process.

Regional A Class – Beginning and Introductory Efforts and Achievements

There is a broad spectrum of levels within the Regional A Class. Here we find performers who are experiencing their first set of skills at a body and equipment level and journey through the developmental levels that take them to the point where they are ready to move into the higher, more challenging A Class.

This class is unique because of the makeup of member guards. It is common to find groups ranging from elementary school age, intermediate school age and even beginning high school groups. In some instances, there could be a group with a varsity level in the A Class while these younger less experienced students comprise their Regional A guard. As a result of this, their ages range from as young as 7 or 8 to as high as 18 in the Scholastic Regional A Class and up to 22 years of age in the Independent Regional A Class. While the latter is not common for Independent Regional A guards, it nonetheless is a possibility.

Many circuits will offer multiple classes within the Regional A category to create a more equitable, level competitive field. As our activity grows, this class has become a large population for most circuits.

WGI does not offer competition at the World Championships for this class; however, they are welcomed at the Regional level of competition. Because of this, there is no formal review process for Regional A guards. This opens the class to a wider range of unintended possibilities. This makes the emphasis on basic tenants of each caption and the reward of achievement key to the judging process to maintain the intent of the class.

In the Regional A Class WGI emphasizes training. Reward is driven by the understanding and achievement of the principles of each caption. This emphasis on training should be accompanied by a limited vocabulary with priorities on establishing solid building blocks on which to develop the skills of the performers.

All score sheets offer a potential of 100 points (tenths) in each sub caption. Equipment and Movement sub-captions being factored in the tabulation process by the 60/140 ratio: 60 over 100 for Vocabulary, and 140 over 100 for

Excellence. This maintains the intended emphasis on training and rewards those units that are strategic with an eye towards excellence and achievement. This tabulation factoring allows for the flexibility to shift these percentages as the Regional A class grows and becomes an integral part of WGI's performance opportunities in the future.

Judges are still expected to be accountable for their raw score as well as their factored score understanding the need for proper profiling to give the competitive edge to those units being strategic with an eye towards training and excellence.

Equipment and Movement scores in the Regional A Class will be given in two decimal places in anticipation of tighter spreads in vocabulary. This extra decimal now shifts the tolerance for sub-caption ties away from the flexibility of recent years.

A Class – Intermediate Efforts and Achievements

The look of the A Class has changed significantly over the recent years. The natural evolution of the activity now yields shows and performers exploring a range of equipment and body skills beyond what was common a few years ago. You will see this reflected in the class descriptive at the top of the A Class score sheets. This class also has a broad spectrum of development within its population. Many circuits will divide their A Class membership into 'sub classes' to provide a more balanced competitive opportunity.

Scholastic A guards will typically range in age from 14-18 years. **Independent A** guards can range from any starting age up to 22 years. This variance creates a difference in the look between Scholastic and Independent A guards, mostly because of physical and mental maturity and the accompanying skill level usually associated with issues of physical strength. The Independent A guards will usually have a wider range of development from performer to performer making issues of training and experience key factors in the class. It is this developmental training factor that is the shared quality between the A classes.

Like the Regional A Class, the emphasis in A Class is on the understanding and achievement of the tenants and principles in each caption.

At the programming level, success is seen in choices that lead the performers understanding and achievement of excellence. Designers are sensitive to musical selections that offer clear guidelines for the performers to follow. Programming choices consider tempo, dynamic changes, and points of audio impact that help these younger performers develop their range of performance skills in all captions.

In this class, we look for some layering of equipment on body and some phrases done while traveling. Phrases will begin to lengthen, showing the performers' skills in this area. Standard tosses will typically top out at quads and fives, with an occasional individual who may be spotlighted with a more challenging aerial. When considering the Independent A Class, remember that skills focusing on strength can be slightly higher. Achievement must drive the reward for these choices.

Staging choices will provide the performers with the opportunity to show growing comprehension of challenging spatial relationships, speed/method of moving and orientation.

As the guards evolve within the class, they will add to their design and vocabularies' range taking on greater challenges as they prepare for the ultimate advancement into Open Class. At the higher level of A Class, students will be offered the opportunity to demonstrate some more challenging *Open Class* skills, typically in Equipment.

Like the Regional A Class, all score sheets offer a potential of 100 points (tenths) in each sub caption. Equipment and Movement sub captions being factored in the tabulation process by a 70/130 ratio: 70 over 100 for Vocabulary and 130 over 100 for Excellence. This maintains the intended emphasis on training and rewards those units that are strategic with an eye towards excellence and achievement. This factoring will allow for a more consistent approach for judges as we further distinguish the emphasis in all classes as they develop and change through the coming years.

Judges are still expected to be accountable for their raw score as well as their factored score understanding the need for proper profiling to give the competitive edge to those units being strategic with an eye towards training and excellence.

Equipment and Movement Scores in the A Class will be given in two decimal places in anticipation of tighter spreads in vocabulary.

Open Class – Advanced Efforts and Achievements

This exciting class finds guards exploring greater challenges with emphasis on more complex equipment and body skills, set in more challenging programs. The maturity and training enforced through the A Class experience allow these guards to explore more demanding equipment and body vocabulary. Standard tosses will be higher, with the higher aerials most commonly fives and sixes. We can expect to see a greater variation on releases and catches as well as a more extensive blend between the equipment and the body. We also can expect to see extended phrasing on all pieces of equipment and the further development of traveling as vocabulary opportunities reflect the shift from ‘transition’ to connect events, to a more advanced ability to create a ‘development’. As skills increase, so does the method by which skills are connected. You’ll notice a shift in the frequency of skills, connected in more challenging ways, that not only impact the range and variety of skills but also indicate an added depth to the vocabulary.

Open Class is where we see the growth in performer’s ability offering greater choreographic choices. We will expect to see this impact all captions, further separating these guards from their A Class counterparts. This shift in opportunity will challenge not only the students but designers and choreographers as well.

This shift in emphasis is reflected in the Open Class scoring system. Unlike the Regional A and A Class, the Open Class scoring system rewards vocabulary and excellence equally in the Equipment and Movement captions, encouraging the exploration of a broader range of vocabulary relative to the growing abilities of the Open Class performer.

Programming and design will show greater exploration into staging and a more developed connection to the audio and physical settings. Individual and group personality, role, characteristics and artistic nuance and details will be present and understood by the performers. The developing communication skills will lend greater effect to the performance of programs. Broader skills and choice will manifest in a range of stylistic identities as more designers, and choreographers work to be more unique and creative.

WGI’s maximum age for the Independent Open Class is 25.

World Classes – Advanced to Virtuoso Efforts and Achievements

WGI has separate score sheets for the two World classes. This was done to accommodate differences relative to physical development and performance maturity that have impacted the Equipment and Movement captions, as well as anticipated shifts in all captions for the coming years.

Scholastic World Class

Scholastic World guard members will range in age from 14-18 years. Many times, they are the upperclassmen of their school including the most experienced performers. In these cases, we will notice more similarities in skillset and consistency in training from member to member.

Because most of these performers have been together for the duration of their high school years, we see more advanced skills throughout these programs in both equipment and movement. Virtuoso skills will be present in the top part of the class, typically led by color guards where the creative and technical teams have developed, over years, the capacities, capabilities, and proofs of these young performers' abilities. We also notice that skills are connected in more complex ways over longer periods of time.

More performance experience and training make choreographic and design options in this class greater than the other scholastic classes. As a result, expect stronger stylistic identities with a wider range of approaches and layers of complexity. This variety can make comparisons in this class more challenging.

These guards have strong defined personalities and are highly creative and unique. Programs are designed to showcase their impressive body and equipment talent. Their depth of training and skills are strong and push the limits of the top of the scholastic classes.

Independent World Class-

Since the removal of the maximum age in the Independent World Class, these groups have elevated the degree of difficulty in the blend of equipment and body set in innovative programs that explore the abstract as well as the literal story of their creations. The score sheet class descriptive in each caption reflects this:

"Sophisticated challenges emphasize the physical and mental capabilities of these more mature performers."

Years of performer experience give designers expanded choreographic and design choices. The collective life experiences of these mature performers have opened the door to limitless programming options considering theme, premise, physical and audio settings. Strength and maturity in this class yield a performer confidence that is reflected in full-out communication of the roles they portray bringing a professional level of performance to the stage. Creativity and imagination are cornerstones in this class.

Factoring the full range of depth will be key in this class as these performers experience has pushed their skill sets into the most extreme of skills. Assessing these skills singly without considering the frequency of skills within phrases and how they are connected, over extended time in challenging environments, would undervalue the accomplishments of these expert performers.

This class contains the legacy color guards where creative and technical staffs, as well as membership, have been together for many years. These years are spent developing and perfecting very specific processes, leading to an extended repertoire of skills and hyper-stylized approaches. These compositional and choreographic fingerprints lead to the strong creative identities delivering us the widest variety from unit to unit, creating the crown jewels of the activity.

When defining the standards for this class, we assume that choices are drawn from all possibilities, without limits, considering the furthest points of development for both performers and staff.

COLOR GUARD STEERING COMMITTEE

Steering Committee Instructors are available to assist with how to express and direct a concern as well as any general questions on caption philosophy. These instructors act as peer advisors and are directly responsible for the shaping of judging philosophy. You can reach out to the Committee as a group using wgicgsc@wgi.org or individually using the contacts below.

Questions on judge philosophy can also be directed to the Education Coordinator. He maintains the continuity of the judge philosophy over the years as Steering Committee membership shifts.

Assistance and advice to all color guards are available from both the Director of Color Guard Development and Education Coordinator.

The Chief Judge is available to instructors in his role as Lead Judge at any Regional and directly via the Color Guard Judge Evaluation Form. **Instructors may not initiate calls or emails to the Chief Judge.** Please see guidelines and process outlined in the section titled “How to Handle Judging Concerns” on the previous page.

There are two Judge Advisors to the Steering Committee that are not available to instructor questions. They will not be listed below.

Any administrative and contest concerns should be directed to the Director of Color Guard

Steering Committee Instructors

Becca Anderson	B.Anderson@wgi.org
Cynthia Bernard	C.Bernard@wgi.org
Michael Shapiro	M.Shapiro@wgi.org
Rick Subel	R.Subel@wgi.org
Andy Toth	A.Toth@wgi.org

Chief Judge

Curtis Costanza	curtis@wgi.org
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Education Coordinator

Karl Lowe	karl@wgi.org
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Director of Color Guard

Dale Powers	dale@wgi.org
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EVALUATION SYSTEM

All color guards will receive assessments along with commentary from a two judge system derived from the sheets designed by our Steering Committee for the 2021 virtual season. The Video submitted may be viewed multiple times by each judge.

All sheets in all divisions will have two sub-captions. One Judge will focus on **Program**. The other judge will focus on **Skills**.

Each sub-caption is assigned a numerical assessment corresponding to the “Box” the adjudicator assigns based on the performance.

Box 1 = 1 / Box 2 = 2 / Box 3 = 3 / Box 4 = 4 / Box 5 = 5

HOW THE ASSESSMENTS WORK

The Judge will be asked to assess the level of success. To do this, each sheet separates degrees of success into 5 distinct levels, or “Boxes”. These Boxes will range from *Box 1*, rewarded to lesser success, to *Box 5*, which will be rewarded to groups meeting the highest criterion or the greatest standard for success in each class.

Each Box is attached to descriptors and percentages that reflect the groups understanding and ability to apply the concepts and principles of each sheet’s emphasis. The Judge will use these tools to help place a group in one of the 5 Boxes. The judge will do this for each subcaption resulting in 2 ratings on each sheet that reflect the group’s efforts in each subcaption’s focus. As we do in live contests, the Judge is asked to rate each caption separately with no assumption of equal value.

Both Judges award ratings in 2 subcaptions, giving the unit a total of 4 separate ratings. Those ratings are then sent to tabulation to be combined into a single rating. Each judge is focused only on his/her/their efforts and is not made aware of a group’s finished factored rating until judging is finished.

Box 1	Box 2	Box 3	Box 4	Box 5
Limited	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Consistently
0-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-89%	90-100%
Rating = 1	Rating =2	Rating=3	Rating=4	Rating=5

* Assessments will be published on WGI.org after each event

It is important to understand that both judges will be viewing the same video submitted by each group. What we are used to calling “upstairs” and “downstairs” refer to separate view-points describing the proximity of the judge to the live performance. This does not apply in a virtual setting. Designers, Instructors, Videographers and Judges will need to understand that the view-point for both judges is the same. This may guide creative choices and choreographic strategies to facilitate a better viewing by the virtual judge- the single audience member!

Lastly, the video format and quality will ultimately contribute to the judges’ ability to perform. Judges have the ability to watch video performances multiple times if needed, but are urged to only judge what they see and not what they think “might be”.

COLOR GUARD

Name/ Ensemble Name _____

WORLD CLASS**OPEN CLASS****A CLASS****REGIONAL A CLASS****MS/CADET/JUNIOR**

STYLISTIC DIVERSITY IS TO BE ENCOURAGED WITH ALL STYLISTIC CHOICES GIVEN EQUAL POTENTIAL FOR SUCCESS.

The points below are derived from the concepts of IA Equipment and
IA Movement as described in the 2024 WGI Adjudication Manual.
"Achievements" considers both EQ and MVT.

RATING GUIDE - FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGES OF UNDERSTANDING AND APPLYING PRINCIPLES

BOX 1	BOX 2	BOX 3	BOX 4	BOX 5
Limited	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Consistently
0 to 59%	60 to 69%	70 to 79%	80 to 89%	90 to 100%
Rating = 1	Rating = 2	Rating = 3	Rating = 4	Rating = 5

VOCABULARY**Equipment and Movement Skills**

The cumulative movement and equipment skills,
the challenges presented by their connections,
as well as the contexts within which the skills
are presented.

**VOCABULARY
RATING****ACHIEVEMENTS****The Degree of Excellence**

The successful execution of all equipment
and movement challenges placed before
the performers.

**ACHIEVEMENTS
RATING**

COLOR GUARD

Name/ Ensemble Name _____

WORLD CLASS

OPEN CLASS

A CLASS

REGIONAL A CLASS

MS/CADET/JUNIOR

STYLISTIC DIVERSITY IS TO BE ENCOURAGED WITH ALL STYLISTIC CHOICES GIVEN EQUAL POTENTIAL FOR SUCCESS.

The points below are derived from the concepts of GE and DA as described in the 2024 WGI Adjudication Manual. "Performance" considers the contribution of the performers in both GE and DA.

RATING GUIDE - FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGES OF UNDERSTANDING AND APPLYING PRINCIPLES

BOX 1	BOX 2	BOX 3	BOX 4	BOX 5
Limited	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Consistently
0 to 59%	60 to 69%	70 to 79%	80 to 89%	90 to 100%
Rating = 1	Rating = 2	Rating = 3	Rating = 4	Rating = 5

PROGRAM

The Creation and the Blueprint

The totality of Effect and Design components and their relationships, over time, through the kinnetic design and all creative efforts.

**PROGRAM
RATING**

PERFORMANCE

The Communication of the Idea

The Performers' ability to understand and fulfill the Creation and the Design so that both may be seen as one, then elevated through successful delivery to the virtual audience.

**PERFORMANCE
RATING**



**DESCRIPTION OF VIRTUAL CRITERIA AND PROCESS TO
SUPPLEMENT THE ADJUDICATION MANUAL**

Virtual Group Event will be assessed by 2 judges.

1 Judge will focus on Program.

1 Judge will focus on Skills.

It is important to note that the concept of combined captions for each sheet calls the judge to understand and apply principles from both captions, as described in the 2026 Adjudication Manual and Rulebook (for in person events). Though viewing and process will be different from live contests, the judge is still asked to adhere to the specific combined captions' lens.

The **Program** Sheet will emphasize the combined principles of the General Effect and Design Analysis captions.

The Judge will be asked to reward in 2 subcaptions – *Program and Performance*

The Program Subcaption is a holistic view of both the *Creation and the Blueprint*:

“The totality of Effect and Design components, and their relationships, over time, through the kinetic design and all creative efforts.”

The Performance Subcaption rewards the performers' role in the *Communication of the Idea*:

“The Performers' ability to understand and fulfill the Creation and the Design, so that both may be seen as one, then elevated through successful delivery to the virtual audience.”

The **Skills** Sheet will emphasize the combined principles of the IA Movement and IA Equipment Captions.

The Judge will be asked to reward in 2 subcaptions – *Vocabulary and Achievements*

The Vocabulary Subcaption is a holistic assessment of all *Equipment and Movement Skills*:

“The cumulative movement and equipment skills, the challenges presented by their connections, as well as the contexts within which the skills are presented.”

The Achievements Subcaption rewards the performers' *Degree of Excellence*:

“The successful execution of all equipment and movement challenges placed before the performers.”

WGI VIRTUAL EVENT STARTING ANNOUNCEMENT

GROUPS

WGI would like for each group to include the following announcement at the beginning of their performance.

“Presenting their program, _____, WGI Sport of the Arts
Show Title

is proud to present _____.”
Group Name

Groups, may select any individual to make this announcement. This individual should speak in a loud, clear voice; enunciating the words so that they will be heard on the recording. If you choose to do this announcement live (instead of having it added to your soundtrack), this individual should be as close to the recording device as possible so as to be heard prior to the start of the performance.

WGI COLOR GUARD VIRTUAL 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 **Color guards in the Independent A Classes from the United States composed of participants not over 22 years of age as of 12:01 a.m. on April 1, 2026, shall be permitted to compete in contests governed by WGI. Independent Open Class color guards from the United States may utilize participants not over 25 years of age as of 12:01 a.m. on April 1, 2026. Independent World Class Color guards may compete with participants of any age. Each color guard appearing in a WGI contest shall be prepared to show proof of age. International independent color guards are not bound by any age limit except for U.S. citizens performing with that group. U.S. citizens performing with an international group may not exceed the age allowed for that classification.**
- 1.1.1 U.S. Military veterans may be granted one (1) year of eligibility immediately following their end of active service. To qualify, individual must have enlisted prior to their 19th birthday, served for no less than four (4) years, and must have been honorably discharged or medially separated. Veteran must submit a copy 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 may not have fewer than five (5) participants nor more than fifty (50) in the competition area at any time.

1.4 No participant shall compete in more than one competing group at the same contest.

1.5 Competing groups are required to compete in the same or higher classification at WGI events as they do in their local circuit, provided that the local circuit utilizes the WGI scoring system. The classification is determined based on the judging sheets used for local adjudication, regardless of the classification itself.

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 There are no space restrictions on the performance area.

2.2 Performance space can be indoors or outdoors.

3.0 SCORING

3.1 The elements in Virtual Color Guard to be judged are:

3.1.1 Group Skills, including sub-captions of Vocabulary and Achievements 50%

3.1.2 Group Program, including sub-captions of Program and Performance 50%

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: Two-point (2.0) penalty per piece of improperly prepared equipment and/or prop.

- 4.2 Definitions of authorized equipment:

7.2 Flags are defined as any material attached to a pike, pole, rod or staff other than an authorized weapon and used as a flag, with a minimum size of eight inches by twelve inches (8" x 12"). National colors must be at least three feet by five feet (3' x 5'). Flagpoles must be at least twenty-four inches (24") in length. (Curved and straight poles are acceptable; however, complete circles, squares, etc. to which material is attached are not flags. Material attached to chains, ropes or hoses are not considered flags.) The intent of this definition is to utilize a flag as a flag and not as a scenic element or a prop.

4.1.2 Rifles are defined as devices with the outward appearance influenced by a rifle. Rifles must be at least twenty-four inches (24") in length.

4.1.3 Sabres/swords are defined as those weapons that are a curved blade (sabre) or a straight blade (sword) and may be constructed of wood, plastic, metal or any other suitable material. Simulated sabers/swords must have either a hand guard or a hilt and must be at least twenty-four inches (24") in length.

4.1.4 Authorized equipment may be modified by the addition of visual items, however, attaching a flag, rifle or sabre/sword to a prop does not make the prop a flag, rifle or sabre/sword – it is still a prop. Timing and Penalty judges have the right to inspect and challenge competing groups for authorized equipment either before or after the maximum performance time with permission of the Contest Administrator.

Any questions on eligibility for authorized equipment should be submitted for approval by the Director of Color Guard.

- 4.3 Definitions of other allowed equipment:

4.2.1 Competing groups may manipulate their soundboard by using a remote-controlled wireless device through a self-supplied network. WGI will provide an area in the stands with a direct line of sight to the competition area for one (1) designated staff member to adjust the mix or control any device using wireless technology. A & Open Class devices must be battery operated as per rule 4.3.3. The soundboard/controlled device must remain in the competition area.

4.2.2 Participants playing musical instruments or singing using a 115/120-volt power source provided to allow amplification is permitted in the competition area.

4.2.3 World Class groups may use any electrical device within their program deemed safe by the Contest Administrator. The Contest Administrator has the ultimate decision regarding safety of any electrical device in consultation with the Director of Color Guard. Groups should consult with the Director of Color Guard prior to using any equipment not specifically defined in these rules. Competing group will assume any liability for issues arising out of use of said electrical devices.

4.3.4 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 prohibited 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 Color Guard
 - 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 will 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 Color Guard 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.

- 4.7 The following safety guidelines apply to the construction, transport, and use of any prop, structure, 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 prop, structure, or podium where their lowest point of contact (e.g., feet, hands) is more than four feet (4') above the competition unless appropriate safety railing, a safety harness, or protective padding is in place around the prop, structure, or podium to prevent injury.
 - 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 (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 will 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 Color Guard to inquire about the use of a particular prop or structure when its permissibility under this section or at a specific site may be in question.

PENALTY: Two-point (2.0) penalty to Disqualification at the discretion of the Contest Administrator, including (but not limited to) prohibition of the use of the over height/unsafe prop(s).

5.0 TIMING

- 5.1 No minimum performance time or equipment time requirements in virtual events.
- 5.2 Maximum performance times are as defined as:

Color Guard Class	Color Guard Maximum
JUNIOR	4.5 min
REGIONAL A	4.5 min
A CLASS	5.5 min
OPEN	6.5 min
WORLD	7.5 min

- 5.3 Timing for the “maximum performance time” will begin with the first step of body movement, first move of equipment or the first note of music whichever comes first after the announcement ends. Judging will also begin at this time. The end of the maximum performance time is at the obvious conclusion of the show. All captions will be judged until the obvious conclusion of the show.

6.0 VIDEO PROCEDURE

- 6.1 Videos must be one take – spliced footage will not be accepted.
- 6.2 Viewpoint should be from an elevated perspective. Zooming in or moving camera is not permitted.
- 6.3 Audio microphone placement is not restricted. Color guards may want to add an audio feed to their recordings.
- 6.4 You will be required to upload your videos for each show separately to FloMarching. Information on how to upload will come at a later date. Use of a more recent performance video for each contest is allowed, but not required.
- 6.5 All videos must be uploaded by the video upload deadline date or the group will forfeit their entry fees and the entry will be disqualified.
- 6.6 The program must own rights to this video (recorded it yourself) and consent to it being posted on FloMarching for use in this Virtual Competition and to WGI for use in any advertising or educational purposes.

7.0 PENALTIES

- 7.1 Any color guard 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, Director of Color Guard or Executive Director.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 Groups using the flag of the United States should follow the [U.S. Flag Code](#). Directors are encouraged to contact the Director of Color Guard for guidance prior to performance.

PENALTY: Denial of performance or possible disqualification as determined by the Executive Director in consultation with the Director of Color Guard.

Additional Information

If a color guard is entered in the in-person WGI World Championship, the color guard will only receive commentary and will not be considered for advancement in the virtual final event.

Assessment results from the event will be posted on wgi.org. No ordinals or scores will be posted from the event.