



Judge Performance

Growth & Brand Jan. 2026

What type of judge are you?

- Judging as a personal expression – why do we do it?
Three pillars, all are of equal importance.

Commentary

Numbers

Professionalism

Examine your historic performance, have you drifted between these, where do you want to land? YOUR BRAND

- Easy vs. Hard call
- Contrarian - personal expertise?
- Keeping everyone happy - no phone calls
- Audience proxy - the obvious
- Caption advocate
- Half-caption expert - keep sub captions close

“tomorrow it will come down to performance”

- Caption geek



Keeping Current

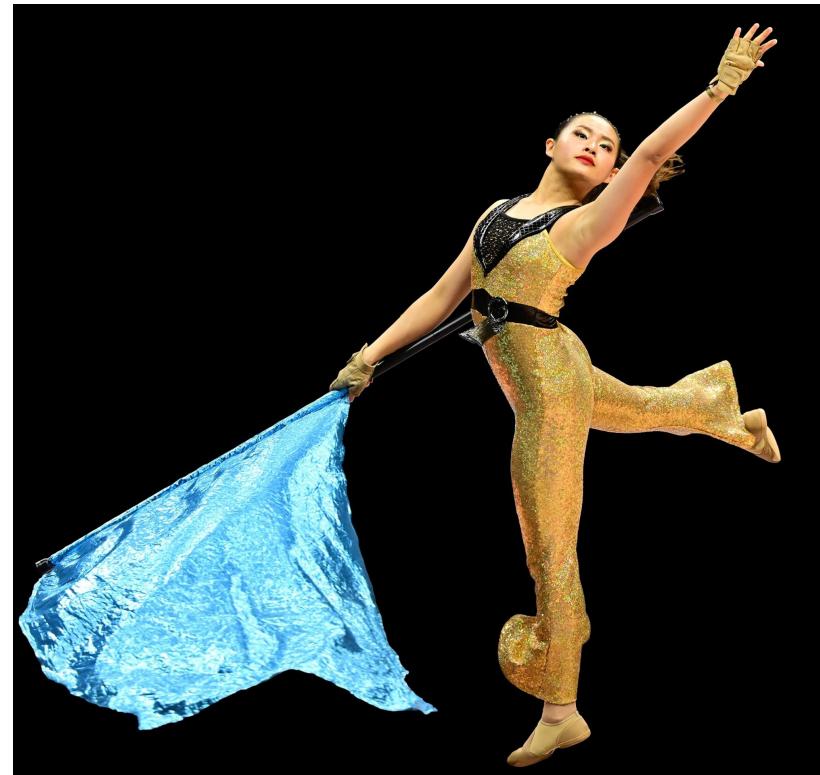
What do you do? Why is it important?

Consume Performing Arts: modern dance, ballet, theater, concerts, film, opera, contemporary art forms.

Study Broader Art and Design trends: visual art and photography, graphic design, fashion trends, cinematography, lighting, staging technology, popular music production.

Stay Culturally Literate: current youth culture and aesthetics, awareness of social / cultural narratives, cultural movement at home and abroad.

Maintain Physical Literacy: take movement classes, yoga, Pilates, fitness training, keep up with current physical training trends.



Study Communication Skills: voice skills, clarity in speaking, pacing of commentary in other venues, tone and neutrality.

Keeping Current

Broaden life experience and relate it to what you do.

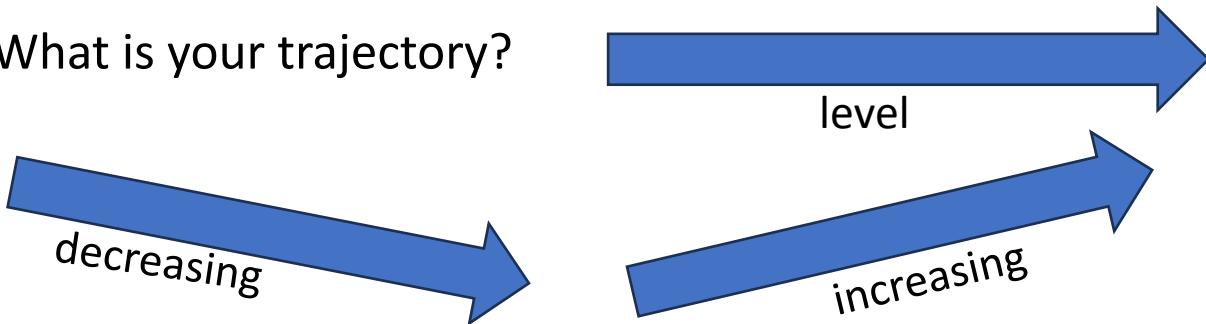
Share your experiences. Great WGI judges are “students of performance” - not just winter guard performance, but all performance. You must stay **culturally aware**, artistically literate, physically informed, and emotionally intuitive.

- ❖ **Update** your profile to highlight your relevancy
- ❖ **Share** your experiences with your peers (formal / informal)
- ❖ You are supported - **stick to the philosophy** and your contract (the manual), but once a judge starts flying solo there is an expiration date.
- ❖ **Dress for success** - especially in Dayton, business casual is now WGI Sharp (branding, Championships is a special event).
- ❖ **Competition Suite** - updates, check before Friday.



Keeping Current

- What is your trajectory?



How are you perceived? administration, your peers, your managers, instructors, etc.

The Distinguished Service Program (in progress)

Goal: Create a program for distinguished judges to plan for transitioning to less active judging, other ways of contributing, or retiring. Tiered structure with the goal of dignity and a smooth off-ramp in mind, while still contributing their valuable knowledge to the winter guard community.



Distinguished Service Program (in progress)

Tier 1: Transitioning Adjudicator (Focus on Reduced Load & Mentorship)

- **Criteria:** Judges with 20+ years of service who express a desire to reduce their judging load or are identified by leadership as potentially benefiting from a lighter schedule. This should be framed as an opportunity for a different kind of contribution.
- **Judging Commitment:** Flexible reduction in assigned shows (e.g., work no more than X number of weekends, or Y total shows per season). They maintain their active judge status but with adjusted expectations.
- **Mentoring Role (Voluntary & Supported):** Offer training and resources for those interested in mentoring newer judges. Pair them thoughtfully based on experience and personality. This provides a valuable way for them to share their knowledge.

Distinguished Service Program (in progress)

Tier 2: Senior Advisor **(Focus on Advisory & Occasional Support)**

- **Criteria:** Judges who have completed the Transitioning Adjudicator period or those who wish to move directly to a less active role. This signifies a shift from regular judging to a more consultative capacity.
- **Judging Commitment:** Primarily available for emergency replacements at local or regional events, with no obligation to accept. This leverages their experience without the pressure of a full schedule.
- **Advisory & Resource Roles:**
 - Invitation to participate in advisory committees on specific topics where their experience is invaluable. This could be via email, occasional virtual meetings, or limited in-person gatherings.
 - Act as a resource for newer judges (with Senior Advisor approval).
 - Potential to contribute to the development of training materials or case studies based on their past experiences.

Distinguished Service Program (in progress)

Tier 3: Emeritus/Honorary Status (Focus on Legacy & Recognition)

- **Criteria:** Senior Advisors who have significantly stepped back from active involvement but whose legacy and contributions deserve continued recognition. This could be a nomination-based or automatic progression after serving as a Senior Advisor.
- **Judging Commitment:** Primarily ceremonial - still associated with the judging community in an honorary way.
- **Advisory Role:** May offer occasional insights or historical context if requested.

Lifers vs. Hobbyists - continuing to build trust

- There is a mounting resentment as lifers (instructors) are treated as hobbyists - what does this look or sound like?
- Dismissive of instructor choices, when does this occur?
- Your work impacts their livelihood, we must reestablish / reinforce the partnership and continue building trust
- We must keep the **contract** relevant if we are to survive. When was the last time you read through it?



WGI 2026 COLOR GUARD
ADJUDICATION MANUAL & RULEBOOK

How can we continue to build judge trust?

- What it can look like: social media, gossip, commentary, dismissive tone, body language in critique, communicating in the stands, predictability
- Building partnership between judge and instructor - discuss methods, brainstorm (critiques, tone, etc.). Yes, it is a two way street.....
- Part of a trust issue - speak from the system (world class only - and that's okay.....not all of us can judge world class).

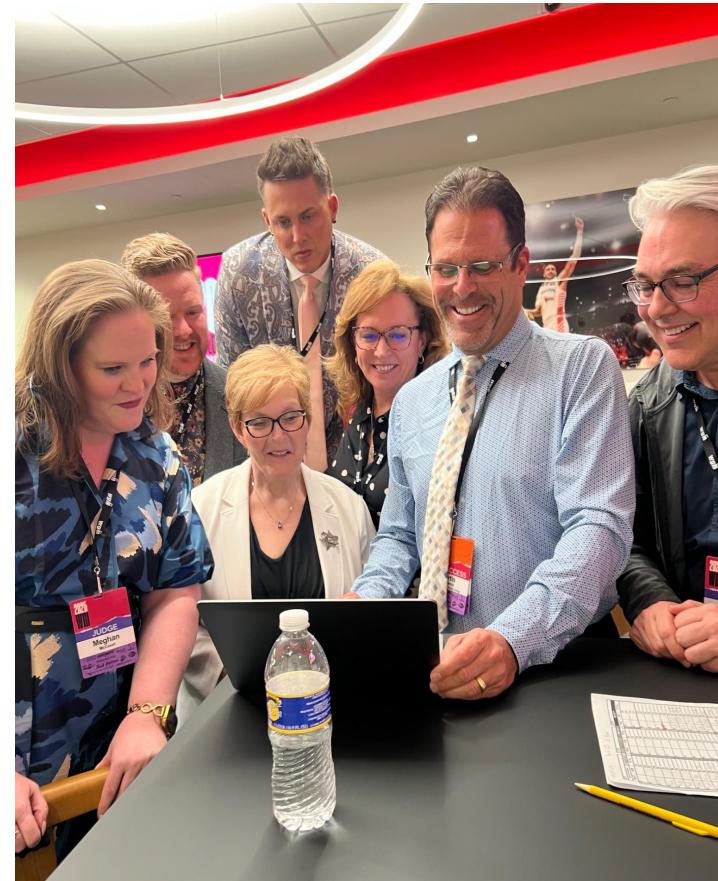
Inter-roster and instructor relationships

- Critiques - the past, present and future.
 - What is different in 2026?
 - Building trust - commentary = class standard. Critique is when we talk about comparisons.
 - AI use

Inter-roster relationships :

- Professional vs. personal
- Your branding
- Potential leverage (local assignments and rolls, national organizations and their similarities / differences)

Possible to have it all - but there are boundaries.



Changes for 2026

Elimination of both Box 6 and the delineation of Box 5 thirds - World Class only.

Box 1	Box 2	Box 3	Box 4	Box 5
0 to 6	7 14 22	30 40 50	60 70 80	90 to 100
Seldom Experiences 0 to 6	Rarely Discovers 7 to 29	Sometimes Knows 30 to 59	Frequently Understands 60 to 89	Always Applies 90 to 100

- Box 5 - Always Applies, means Always Applies
- More room to profile and spread
- What does 99 and 100 mean?
- The class standard is box 5
- Some to All is more fluid and organic, no hard and fast lines
- Why? No method to train what was Standard Setting in Box 6

Box 5 Always Applies	
90	100
90	100
SOME TO ALL	

Your work day is improving

SA leapfrogging - to ease the length of the day. One-third from each panel and one-third for the remaining wild cards will advance to finals. Prelims non-seeded. Regional A teams to go on Saturday night. Sunday shows end before 4:30.

Lead judge support - two lead judges will be working together at all Regional Plus Events in order to assist in calibrating scores. No seeded rounds, so less likelihood they will be balanced.

What does that do to your perception in finals when you have not seen all the teams - How do you approach that?

Do you have a weekend open?

Talk to me privately - I have a proposition for you.

**WE ARE HERE TO ASSIST
IN YOUR SUCCESS**



THANK YOU!