

WGI WINDS 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 Winds groups in the Independent Class may compete with performers of any age.

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:

- Multiple groups within a school district may be approved to combine on a case-by-case review by WGI. In very rare cases, schools from different districts may combine if approved.

- If approved, combined school groups may be required to compete using a school district name.
- Groups utilizing students from parochial, vocational, or charter schools must apply for approval under combined school guidelines.
- All groups shall submit the Combined Schools Participating Group Master Agreement signed by the district superintendent and file with the WGI office.
- Groups applying to combine students from multiple schools within a school district must apply for approval by December 1.
- 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 must have a minimum of five (5) participants in the competition area at any time, including one optional conductor.

1.4.1 Winds groups may use one (1) optional conductor located in the competition area or in a designated place in the stands, usually in the center aisle. If there is no aisle, the Contest Administrator will designate a space in the seating area. If located in the stands, conductor must remain for the entire performance and may not cross the front sideline once performance has begun.

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 The “competition area” shall measure a minimum of sixty feet by ninety feet (60’ x 90’) and does not include entry ramps, hallways, bleachers, or seating areas. Competing groups are permitted to utilize the entire designated competition area for their performance. All participants must be in the designated competition area when performance time begins. Depending on the performance venue, WGI will authorize additional competition area space whenever possible and include that information in the diagram (footprint) available to all competing groups to identify the competition area. No competition area may exceed the maximum size of the competition area (72’ x 106’) offered at the world championships. While the competition area will be increased whenever possible, all competing groups must be prepared to perform within the minimum sixty-foot by ninety-foot (60’ x 90’) area.

2.2 All WGI contest sites must have a minimum of seventy feet by one hundred feet (70’ x 100’) to ensure the necessary space for a “safety zone” of five (5) feet from any spectator seating, and the minimum sixty-foot by ninety-foot (60’ x 90’) competition area within the site.

2.3 Once performance timing begins, no performer may enter the safety zone. All equipment and props (including all sound equipment) must be grounded within the competition area except during setup and teardown. No props or equipment may be staged within the safety zone and no choreography outside the competition area, including the safety zone, is allowed. An optional conductor may be located in a designated place in the stands. An optional conductor may be located in the competition area or in a designated place in the stands, usually in the center aisle. If there is no aisle, the Contest Administrator will designate a space in the seating area. Conductor is limited to one (1) individual. The conductor, if located in the stands, must remain

for the entire performance. No personnel may cross the front sideline once the performance has begun.

PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) per participant or piece of equipment for each violation of the safety zone.

- 2.4 The front boundary line shall be considered to extend the full width of the competition area and shall be clearly marked at a minimum of five (5') feet from the first row of spectator seating.

PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty for each participant or piece of equipment in violation of the competition area boundary.

- 2.5 The center of the front boundary line shall be marked by a six-inch (6") taped line at the front and back of the competition area. The outer edges of the competition area shall also be marked by six-inch (6") taped lines at the corners to designate the safety zone.

- 2.6 All floor coverings (tarps) must fit in the designated competition area and may not enter the safety zone or cover the front boundary line.

PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty for each participant or piece of equipment in violation of the competition area boundary.

- 2.7 120-volt grounded power sources shall be available at the front and back of the center line of the competition area and will be the only power sources available for use. Competing groups may not plug into any wall outlet in the competition area and must provide extension cords.

- 2.8 Power sources must be dedicated for competing group use only and have no other electrical devices using these designated power sources.

3.0 SCORING

- 3.1 The elements to be judged are:

- 3.1.1 Music Analysis = Thirty percent (30%), one judge

Composition = Fifteen percent (15%) (For A classes, Ten and a half percent 10.5%)

Achievement = Fifteen percent (15%) (For A classes, Nineteen and a half percent (19.5%))

- 3.1.2 Visual Analysis = Thirty percent (30%), one judge

Composition = Fifteen percent (15%) (For A classes, Ten and a half percent (10.5%))

Achievement = Fifteen percent (15%) (For A classes, Nineteen and a half percent (19.5%))

- 3.1.3 Overall Effect = Forty percent (40%), one judge

Repertoire Effectiveness = Twenty percent (20%)

Communication Effectiveness = Twenty percent (20%)

- 3.1.4 Timing and Penalties = Penalties assessed per rules

- 3.2 All three judges will be positioned higher in the audience viewing area. The Timing and Penalty judge will be positioned in the competition area.

4.0 EQUIPMENT AND INSTRUMENTATION

- 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: One tenth of a point (0.1) penalty per piece of equipment

- 4.2 Definitions of authorized equipment and use:

4.2.1 Instruments typically utilized and recognized as part of a band or orchestra, including electronic instruments.

4.2.2 Competing groups may control their soundboard by using a remote-controlled wireless device through a self-supplied wireless network. WGI will provide an area in or near the upstairs judging area for one designated staff member to control the device using wireless technology or communicate to a performer running the sound board via wireless voice/two-way radio. The sound board must remain in the competition area. A participant in the competition area must control all lighting and robotic devices.

4.2.3 Any sound generating source, computer, synthesizer, etc. must be located in the competition area and operated by a participant. The show's soundtrack can be started remotely via a remote-controlled wireless device through a self-supplied wireless network mentioned in Rule 4.2.2. In the Independent classes, a staff member may operate the soundboard since there are no age restrictions.

PENALTY: Two-point (2.0) penalty to Disqualification.

4.2.4 All electronic sounds are permitted except the direct and simultaneous duplication of wind parts that exist within the group's wind score by similar electronic voices

4.2.5 During a performance, adult or non-performing student personnel (other than the designated conductor) may not coach, cue, etc., any performers or control any wireless lighting events outside the competition area.

PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) to disqualification at the discretion of the Timing and Penalties judge.

4.2.6 Groups may use any electrical device deemed safe by the Contest Administrator, who has the ultimate decision regarding the safety of any device in consultation with the Director of Percussion. Groups should consult with the Director of Percussion prior to using any equipment not specifically defined in these rules. The competing group will assume any liability for issues arising out of the use of said electrical devices.

4.2.7 Battery operated devices using common of 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.

4.2.8 One staff member may enter the safety zone or competition area at any point during the performance time to address a safety issue affecting participants, spectators, or staff, or respond to catastrophic equipment failure, loss of power, or connectivity to a sound system. A penalty for this boundary violation will be assessed by the Timing and Penalty Judge but is subject to mandatory review and possible removal by the Contest Administrator with the advisement of the Wind Administrator if present.

PENALTY: One point (1.0) per staff member entering the safety zone and competition area (subject to Contest Administrator removal)

- 4.3 The following are NOT ALLOWED 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 Percussion.
 - 4.4.11.1 Use of strobe lights require a warning to the audience by the competing group prior to the performance.

WGI shall at all times 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: Two-point (2.0) penalty or Disqualification for use of any prohibited items.

- 4.6 The following safety guidelines apply to the construction, transport, and use of any prop, structure, or 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 removal.
- 4.6.1 No participant may be positioned on any part of a prop, structure, or podium where their lowest point of contact (e.g., feet, hands) are more than four feet (4') above the competition floor 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 (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 form padding (gymnastic mat type) or other suitable material that measures at least two inches (2") in thickness.
- 4.6.2 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.
- 4.6.3 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.
- 4.6.4 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.
- 4.6.5 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.
- 4.6.6 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.
- 4.6.7 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 front ensemble.
- 4.6.8 WGI shall at all times 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 or its property.

Directors are encouraged to contact the Director of Winds to inquire about the use of a particular prop when its permissibility under this section or at a specific site may be in question.

The Contest Administrator and/or Chief Judge shall at all times have the authority to prohibit the use of any prop or equipment that presents an unreasonable or unacceptable risk of injury or harm to participants or others or potential danger to a venue or its property.

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 overheight/unsafe prop(s).

5.0 TIMING

5.1 Competing groups will be timed to compete at intervals according to class.

Class	Interval Time	Minimum Performance Time	Maximum Performance Time
World Class	11 minutes	4 minutes	8 minutes
Open Class	10 minutes	3.5 minutes	7 minutes
A Class	9 minutes	3 minutes	6 minutes

5.2 Interval time will include entrance, setup, performance, exit, and removal of all participants, props, floors, and equipment from the competition area. Interval time will begin when the Timing and Penalty judge signals the group to start the interval time and conclude when the group clears the vertical or horizontal centerline after the performance. The group must continue to make a deliberate and obvious exit from the competition area and not impede the entrance of the next competing group.

5.3 Each competing group, with all participants, shall remain in the competition area and be judged in all captions for the minimum time defined in Rule 5.1.

5.4 Timing for the "maximum performance time" will begin with the first step of body movement, the first move of equipment, or the first note of music, whichever comes first after the group's announcement, and end at the obvious conclusion of the performance. All captions will be judged until the obvious conclusion of the performance.

5.5 Competing groups cannot be required to perform before the time set in the published Preliminaries schedule. WGI may adjust the published schedule for Finals at the discretion of the Contest Administrator. If a schedule change occurs, competing groups will be notified by text message.

PENALTY: Five-hundredths of a point (.05) penalty per second for any timing violation

5.6 Should any competing group find themselves unable to perform at their scheduled time, they will be rescheduled to perform during the next most suitable performance slot in their class. The Contest Administrator will make the necessary schedule adjustments.

PENALTY: Five-tenths of a point (0.5) penalty for each class interval time of delay.

6.0 ENTRY

6.1 **All participants must enter the competition area through the designated entry door, tunnel, or ramp. Before the performance begins, the competing group may utilize the entire competition area for setup and pre-show preparations.**

PENALTY: Five-tenths of a point (0.5) penalty per participant for failing to use the designated entry door, tunnel, or ramp

6.2 All props must fit through a standard-size double door with the center bar removed. No exceptions will be made for oversized props regarding timing. Props are not permitted in the competition area before the performing group's scheduled time.

6.3 Any competing group creating a delay in the schedule will be subject to penalty.

PENALTY: Five-hundredths of a point (0.05) penalty per second of delay up to 10 points.

6.4 The competing group will line up at a designated ready line to enter the competition area.

6.5 Authorized equipment and props may be placed anywhere in the competition area by participants or anyone prior to the start of the performance. Any non-participants involved in the set-up must exit the competition area and safety zones prior to the start of performance time.

PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty for each non-participant failing to exit the competition area and safety zones prior to the performance time

6.6 Competing groups may include a playing entrance as part of the performance following introduction. Groups may warm-up as part of the floor set-up.

6.7 Once the performance begins, participants must remain in the designated competition area until the obvious conclusion of the performance. Participants may not re-enter the competition area during the performance time once they have exited, until after the conclusion of the performance. Boundary line violations (including first aid cases) do not constitute leaving the competition area.

PENALTY: Five-tenths of a point (0.5) penalty for each participant failing to remain in the competition area for the designated time or returning after they have exited before the conclusion of the performance.

6.8 The front boundary line is always inviolate except for participants involved in entrance setup or teardown at the end of the performance.

PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty for each participant for each front boundary violation.

6.9 All floor coverings (tarps) must fit within the designated competition area and may not cover the front boundary line or enter the safety zone.

PENALTY: Two-point (2.0) penalty

7.0 EXIT

7.1 Exit may be over any line at the conclusion of the performance.

7.2 All participants must exit the competition area through the designated exit door, tunnel, or ramp.

PENALTY: Five-tenths of a point (0.5) penalty per participant for failing to use the designated exit door, tunnel, or ramp

7.3 All personnel, equipment, and props must clear the vertical or horizontal centerline at the conclusion of the interval time. The timing line shall be for visual use by the Timing and Penalties judge and not designated by tape.

7.4 For purposes of timing, equipment and props are considered removed when they cross the vertical or horizontal centerline. After crossing the timing line, all equipment and props must continue to make forward progress out of the competition area promptly or receive a penalty at the discretion of the Timing and Penalty judge.

PENALTY: Three hundredths of a point (.03) per second for any timing violation.

7.5 There will be no flying of tarps (also known as "ballooning") to clear the floor at the conclusion of a competing group's performance.

PENALTY: Disqualification

8.0 PENALTIES

- 8.1 Timing and Penalty judges will assess all penalties for infractions in the competition area. Contest Administrators may not waive competition area penalties. The judge must document the reason, approximate location, and time for any penalty during the interval time for the group.

It is always the responsibility of the group representative to identify penalties post-performance. If the group representative fails to initiate a penalty inquiry with the Contest Director within fifteen (15) minutes of the penalty notification, the group will forfeit its right to any inquiry, and the penalty will be considered final and not subject to further review. The final two groups in any round or class must check in with the Timing and Penalty judge while exiting the competition area, as they may not have the full fifteen (15) minutes before final score submission

If an inquiry is requested, the Contest Director will consult with the Timing and Penalty judge to confirm the penalty details and respond to the group via text or arrange an in-person meeting, if necessary. No video recordings will be used during any inquiry. Once the inquiry is complete, the group representative will be notified via text of the final decision. The final determination on any penalty rests with the Timing and Penalty judge.

- 8.2 Any competing group 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 Chief Executive Officer.
- 8.3 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.
- 8.4 Competing groups using the flag of the United States should follow the [U.S. Flag Code](#). Directors are encouraged to contact the Director of Winds for guidance prior to performance.

PENALTY: Denial of performance or possible disqualification as determined by the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Director of Winds.