

DAYTON 2026 INFORMATION FOR LEAD JUDGES:

Introduce yourself to the CA and Tab people, having a good working relationship with those folks will make your day go more smoothly, especially when things go sideways.

All sites must lock **after the second round**. Remind judges to use their full range of numbers **in round one**, otherwise it will play havoc later in the day. They must use the same tolerance in round one as in round six, **discuss the fact that history shows us that we are more rigid in early rounds and less rigid in later rounds. The tolerance must be the same.**

Ask **how the panel wants to receive information** during the contest: while it is occurring, at the end of a round, towards the end of a round. Please be patient with people if they don't immediately input a number, some judges will simply put in a number as a place holder, then will adjust after they see another few teams. Some of them need to get grounded before they input. *Look at the thresholds, only intervene when a judge's ranking will make a threshold difference or is significant. If someone is running low, but is consistent from round to round, then all is good. If someone has a team in 5th and they are 1s and 2s across the board, let it go (unless it will impact the threshold). They are not to converse in the stands with each other.....the only safe place to do that is in the judge's room during breaks.....but they should not be discussing scores. The lead judge is their safety net where they can discuss scores.

Food – the office has assured that food will be available, and they have gone the extra mile to make sure, so please do not forgo the meal.

IO split between sites – have anchors and solid notes, not ideal (William).

Remind judges to read and comment on the information in **Comp. Suite** regarding show titles and details for all classes. You will occasionally find a nugget that really sheds light on the premise. Critical for upstairs judges, marginally helpful for downstairs judges.

When things go wrong with a performance – you must acknowledge it and it must manifest itself somewhere in your scoring. You must respond to the performance (even when it is not positive) –Karl says, you must assume that was the intention.

Standings / rankings - there are too many factors that impact the standings. Regionals run higher or lower or one judge running lower than the rest of the panel, a difference of only one point can make a difference of 20 positions, a great or poor regional performance, 400-mile rule. Some teams are allotted 1.5 points per week of automatic growth – how accurate is that? Standings are for seeding purposes only. Examples: 41st seeded in 2023 made finals in SA, 17th c.g. won.....be open to anything! Judge the round, pick the ones to advance regardless of performance order! This weekend is like no other during the season. They are all in the

same building at the same time with the same panel for the first time all year. Not all color guards progress at the same rate.

All rounds are split in half and then scrambled; the winner of each round could come from anywhere. There were teams that withdrew from later regionals because their standing score increased 1.5 points a week, and they rolled the dice that they would not reach that score at a later regional.

Can **hold two rounds of each class**, then each round after that must be verified.

HOW TEAMS ADVANCE:

SA prelims 7 rounds = 135, Cintas 68/Truist 67 (top 28 at each site)

SA semis 4 rounds of 14 = 56 SA finals top 20*

IA prelims 7 rounds = 62 Convention

IA semis 3 rounds of 12 = 36 IA finals top 15

SO prelims 6 rounds = 52 Nutter

SO semis 3 rounds = 36 SO finals top 15

IO prelims 4 rounds, 2 sites = 41 UD/Nutter

IO semis 24 one round* IO finals top 15

SW prelims 3 rounds = 26 UD

SW semis 20 one round* SW finals top 15

IW prelims 3 rounds = 32 UD

IW semis 24 one round* IW finals top 15

SA/IA semis advance – ranked from prelims and placed in rounds, split into two groups and scrambled.

*Only time all year where we judge 1-20 or 1-24 in one round in Open and World. This takes a special understanding of numbers, but there has been a shift in box 5 and the elimination of box 6. Instructors have been told (for years) that scores could decrease from prelims, to semis to finals.

Judges are NOT audience proxies – we are educated and trained, we follow a criteria and use standards of box integrity in assigning scores.

MATH – verify means verify, but if you make an error, let your lead know immediately. We will have some flexibility to work with the tab and CA to open the program. Locking scores – limit your math errors, there is an absolute need to be careful and accurate.Lead judges have 30 minutes after scores are posted, after that they are official. Be aware of your tablets and recordings – look at the counter..... Has Comp. Suite been updated? THERE ARE EXTRA TABLETS AT EVERY SITE.

Factoring in A class (use your full range) do not take factoring into account. No need to think about the factoring, just do your job. The factoring will take care of itself, original intent per Karl / Steering Committee may change the percentages.... IA judges – keep your raw totals and be aware of them, the factoring should not break your ties. This seems to bite us every few years - **IA judges should not have a bottom line (raw score) tie!**

Be succinct and specific in your wrap-ups, so you can go right to your analysis, comparison, and scoring. Remember to consider derived achievement – but....

Color guards will look completely different from the last time you saw them. You are under no obligation to rank teams in a way you did previously. Competitive neighborhoods will absolutely change from regionals and in some cases will change from day to day here in Dayton. These neighborhoods are huge this year.

Don't leave room in prelims or semis thinking you will need to fit guards in those spots, that's not your job. Know the job for each contest. You will have sub-caption ties, especially in rounds of 20 and 24.

Box 5 requirements – lower third (some/some), middle (most/most) third, upper third (all/all). Good reminder to look at Box 5 “always applies.” Must consider the class standards. But there was a shift this year in World class, no box thirds in box 5 and the elimination of box 6.

Taking time after **finals** to review. It's okay to go back to the judge room to review your numbers if you need a little more time. But remember that they must get the awards ceremony going in Finals. We have had some issues with judges verifying without checking every number, once your device is locked it is hell to go back. That doesn't mean it can't happen, but there are a lot of factors that come into play.

Semifinals panels – do not take the order of appearance in any contest into consideration – remember the purpose of prelims is to move teams to the next round, get them into neighborhoods. They are not ranking them top to bottom.....too many hours are between rounds, too few numbers to use.

Know the purpose of each contest – Be especially aware of red lines – how teams advance and be over cautious of your spreads. Know the meaning of a tenth. Be prepared for large rounds of 20-24. Do not go into that contest without giving it some thought. Your managers have provided you with some tools to that end. Additionally, your leads will inform you of the numbers of teams advancing. Different purposes in semis than in prelims – the prelim panel was completely different. Everyone starts in last place! The system picks the winner! (Karl's bumper sticker). Know the thresholds for each contest and be acutely aware of your spreads around those rankings

Displaced time (IA judges) – individuals versus multiples (individuals expanding their individual ranges, but all would need to exhibit the skill for it to have significant value in growth.) Similarities abound.

IA judges sample the presentational – then go wherever you would like (dancers, etc.).

Profiling – the following paragraphs are discussion points around profiling - use at your convenience.

Using a full range of numbers, many judges fell back on the formulaic approach to profiling and spreads. Of course consider derived achievement, but you must put that tenant in context.

There have been some misinterpretations that perhaps the bottom-line number has less importance than in the past, and that isn't the intention. Sub-caption integrity and ranking/spreading the sub-captions does not mean that there are 2 independent contests going on, but rather 2 equal partners contributing to the goal of bottom-line ranking, spread, and rating as close to the correct box third as possible.

One reason judges begin with the WHAT and put the HOW lower most of the time is a simple one. There is an assumption that students should be able to handle the work written by the instructor staff. Some instructors do not write for the skill set of the students OR they assume the skill set will eventually match the writing OR they trust other staff members will train the students to achieve the written work.

In one scenario, it can be stated reasonably that if a staff does not write for the student skill set, then it is not the students who are "at fault" for a bad run. We see without the ability or understanding to perform the material they were given. Is it not plausible then to assess the performance over the rep?

Training and the association of that training is worthy of discussion, especially with the addition of the "completion of phrase." Performers are not training themselves. It is the knowledgeable staff that provides the information necessary for performers to do what is being asked of them. So, a legitimate mind shift could pose the question, it is one group of staff members that provide the training for the performers in conjunction with another group of instructors (no doubt sometimes the same instructors) that allow the sub-caption profiling to occur?