WGI PERCUSSION CONTEST RULES
2027

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 Percussion groups from the United States competing in the Independent class and composed of participants not over 22 years of age as of 12:01 AM on April 1, 2027, shall be permitted to compete in contests governed by WGI. Any participant who has reached 23 years of age as of that date is ineligible.

1.2 Each group appearing at a WGI contest shall be prepared to show proof of age of any participant upon request. International independent groups are not bound by any age limit.

1.2.1 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 medically separated. Veteran must submit a copy of their discharge papers and separation documents to WGI prior to December 1 to qualify.

1.3 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.

1.3.1 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.

1.4 Competing groups must have a minimum of five (5) participants in the competition area at any time, including one optional conductor.

1.5 Marching percussion groups may use one optional student conductor positioned in the competition area. Concert percussion groups may use one non-student conductor positioned in the competition area.

1.6 Competing groups are required to compete in the same 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 The "competition area" shall measure a minimum of ninety feet by sixty feet (90' x 60') 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 (106' x 72') offered at the world championships. Although the competition area will be increased whenever possible, all competing groups must be prepared to perform within the minimum ninety-foot by sixty-foot (90' x 60') area.

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

2.3 Once performance timing begins, no participant 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.

PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty for each participant or piece of equipment in 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-point (1.0) penalty for each infraction of the floor covering (tarp) entering the safety zone or covering the front boundary line.

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 in the Marching classes to be judged are:

3.1.1 Effect-Music = Thirty percent (30%), one judge
Overall Effect = Fifteen percent (15%)
Music Effect = Fifteen percent (15%)

3.1.2 Effect-Visual = Twenty percent (20%), one judge
Overall Effect = Ten percent (10%)
Visual Effect = Ten percent (10%)

3.1.3 Music = Thirty percent (30%), one judge
Composition = Ten percent (10%)
Performance Quality = Twenty percent (20%)

3.1.4 Visual = Twenty percent (20%), one judge
Composition = Eight percent (8 %)
Performance Quality = Twelve percent (12 %)

3.1.5 Timing and Penalties = Penalties assessed per rules

3.2 The elements in Concert classes to be judged are:

3.2.1 Music = Fifty percent (50%), one judge
Composition = Twenty percent (20%)
Performance Quality = Thirty percent (30%)

3.2.2 Effect = Fifty percent (50%), one judge
Program = Twenty percent (20%)
Fulfillment = Thirty percent (30%)

3.2.2 Timing and Penalties = Penalties assessed per rules

3.3 The Music judge will be positioned low in the viewing area. The Effect and Visual judges will be positioned higher in the audience viewing area. The Timing and Penalty Judge will be positioned in the competition area. Specific row assignments will be determined by the Chief Judge based on each venue's specific attributes.

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: One point (1.0) penalty per piece of improperly prepared equipment and/or prop.

4.2 All electronically produced musical material must be triggered in real-time, and no single, triggered, electronic sound may produce rhythmic intent.

4.2.1 Human-voice samples presented as singing or spoken word may be performed with single or multiple triggers, regardless of any rhythmic intent.

PENALTY: Ten-point (10.0) penalty

4.3 Definitions of authorized equipment and use:

4.3.1 Groups may remotely operate their sound system for the purpose of live mixing the performance through a self-supplied wireless network. WGI will provide an area in or near the Effect & Visual judging area for one designated staff member to wirelessly mix during the performance. The sound system must remain in the competition area. Staff members may also communicate through a text-based messaging tool to a designated participant in the event the sound system needs adjustment.

4.3.2 All electronically produced musical material must be triggered by a participant in the competition area. Staff members may not trigger sounds or musical material.

4.3.3 All lighting and robotic devices must be controlled by a participant in the competition area. Staff members may also communicate through a text-based messaging tool to a designated participant in the event the lighting or robotics need adjustment.

PENALTY: Two-point (2.0) penalty

4.3.4 During a performance, non-performing personnel may not coach, cue, etc., any participants, trigger any audio events, or control any wireless lighting or robotic events from outside the competition area. As per rule 4.3.1 and 4.3.3, staff members may communicate via text message with a designated participant controlling the sound system, lighting or robotics.

PENALTY: One point (1.0) to Disqualification at the discretion of the Timing and Penalty Judge

4.3.5 Groups may use any electrical device within their program deemed safe by the Contest Administrator. The Contest Administrator has the ultimate decision regarding the safety of any device in consultation with the Director of Percussion and/or Chief Executive Officer. Groups should consult with the Director of Percussion prior to using any equipment not specifically defined in these rules. The Group will assume any liability for issues arising out of the use of said electrical devices.

PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty to Disqualification at the discretion of the Timing and Penalty Judge.

4.3.6 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. Instruments made of glass may be approved by the Director of Percussion on a case-by-case basis.

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. The use of strobe lights requires 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 shall have the final authority to prohibit the use of any item if it determines that the item poses 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 Percussion to inquire about the use of specific items or materials when the permissibility of an item under this section or at a particular contest venue may be in question.

PENALTY: Five-point (5.0) penalty up to Disqualification for use of any prohibited items.

4.5 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 setup and removal.

4.5.1 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 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 inches (2") in thickness.

4.5.2 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.

4.5.3 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.

4.5.4 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.

4.5.5 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.

4.5.6 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.

4.5.7 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.

WGI shall have the final authority to prohibit the use of any prop, structure, or podium, or require additional safety measures if it determines that the item poses 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 Percussion to inquire about the use of a particular prop when its permissibility under this section or at a specific contest venue may be in question.

PENALTY: Two-point (2.0) penalty to Disqualification at the discretion of the Percussion Administrator, including, but not limited to, prohibition of the use of the prop, structure, or podium.

5.0 TIMING

5.1 Percussion 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.

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

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 the official communication method designated by WGI.

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 or part thereof up to the conclusion of the class and/or contest.

6.0 ENTRY

6.1 All participants must enter the competition area through the designated entry door, tunnel, or ramp. Prior to the start of performance time, 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: Three-hundredths of a point (.03) penalty per second of delay up to a maximum of ten (10) points.

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

6.4.1 Marching Percussion Classes only: As space becomes available, front ensemble equipment, performers, and helpers, when time permits, may cross the timing line early and begin setup. Entering personnel must maintain a minimum distance of four (4') feet from the exiting group and may not encroach on, obstruct, or interfere with the exiting group.

6.4.2 All other group elements not involved with the front ensemble, including battery performers and equipment, floor covers, props, and additional staff and helpers, must remain at the designated ready line until signaled to enter by the Timing and Penalties judge.

6.5 Groups may not begin an audible preshow until after the previous group's interval time has concluded.

PENALTY: Two-point (2.0) penalty

6.6 When the competing group first enters the competition area, an announcement of "Please welcome from (city, state, country), (name of competing group)" will be made. Once the director has cued the T&P judge for the second announcement, the announcer will say, "Performing their program (title), WGI Sport of the Arts is proud to present (name of competing group)". All competing groups are permitted to have this second announcement pre-recorded into their soundtrack but may not deviate from the wording of this announcement.

PENALTY: Five-tenths of a point (0.5) penalty for pre-recording not following the prescribed format.

6.7 Authorized equipment and props may be placed anywhere in the competition area by participants or anyone prior to the start of the performance. Any personnel not performing must exit the competition area and safety zones before the second announcement in Rule 6.6.

PENALTY: Two tenths of a point (0.2) for each individual in the competition area and safety zones after the conclusion of the second announcement.

6.8 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.

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 Penalty 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 prompt forward progress out of the competition area 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 Judge 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 final scores may be submitted before the full fifteen (15) minute inquiry period has elapsed.

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, or the Director of Percussion.

8.3 All programs, soundtracks, themes, and costuming must be appropriate for presentation in a scholastic venue and suitable for national marketing and sponsorship opportunities.

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 Percussion for guidance prior to performance.

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