

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CRITIQUES - 2023

This document is provided by the 2023 WGI Steering Committee as part of an information packet to Instructors. The following is best understood with the aid of the 2023 Adjudication Manual and each Captions' Score Sheets. Please know that this document supplements the WGI Adjudication Manual and the WGI Policy Manual. Those documents are deferred to first.

Will Critiques be offered to every Class?

- For the 2023 Season, critiques, when available, will be offered to A, Open, and World Classes.

Will Critiques be offered at every Regional?

- In 2023, WGI will offer critiques at Regionals when possible.
- Large 1-Day Regionals will likely not be able to offer critique.
- The Steering Committee Instructors feel that this opportunity is critical to young developing units, and encourage instructors to participate if it is offered at a WGI event you attend. This is valuable information and should be taken seriously, so prepare accordingly, and understand that this is an opportunity that will not be available to everyone.

If critique is offered at my Regional, how do I get included, and is critique guaranteed to everyone?

- Schedule determines the number of critique spots that will be available at each Regional.
- Once Registered, if critique is offered, groups (Director and secondary contact) will receive an e-mail from the WGI office to sign up for critique.
- Critique opportunity will also be listed at the bottom of the schedule once released.
- At most Regionals, all groups in the SA, IA, IO, SO, IW, SW classes that sign up, can be accommodated at critique.
- If all are not accommodated, then those groups going to Championships will be given first priority. The remaining positions, if any, will be filled according to sign-up order.

What is the purpose for critiques?

- To provide a discussion venue where instructors and judges can grow from the face-to-face exchange of information.
- To allow instructors to gain clarification on any questionable area of the commentary.
- To discuss the scoring application offering insights into what drove a number or placement.
- To allow the color guard to best prepare for World Championships.

How much time will I have for critique?

- In this reintroduction year for critique, we will offer time intervals of 3 minutes at each station. Each station will be defined by Caption.

- Because 4 different groups will be in any given rotation, critiques combining the entire panel at once will not be made available.
- If attendance at critique is low, the Lead Judge is able to extend intervals at stations as they see fit. Priority will go to the 2020 standards for critique, prioritizing World, then Open classes.

I know judges are trained to ask about my group's goals. What are some common examples of goals?

- To understand more and to improve.
- To move up in the ranks, make Finals, be top of the class.
- 'Want ideas for rehearsal focus, ways to focus improvement to specific areas.
- 'Want the performers to have a positive experience and recruit for the future.

If my group's goals are other than competitive, can critique be valuable to me?

- Critique time is your time. You guide the discussion.
- Realize that a conversation not discussing competition will be unexpected by the judge. It will be critical that you state your goal and the purpose of the conversation as you sit down to talk. Know what you want from the experience and be able to state that.
- Many WGI Judges are also educators and all are able to be empathetic and helpful to young instructors. All judges will be able to respond candidly and honestly about their observations, even out of the competitive context.
- It is common for Equipment and Movement Judges to use their time explaining the *70/130 Emphasis on Excellence* to young A Instructors. If you don't mind not discussing numbers and placement, then these judges can be a valuable resource for understanding the scoring system.
- Though many judges are also Instructors, it is not an assumption that judges can discuss all aspects of your program. They are obliged to speak from their caption's perspective first and then reveal if they feel comfortable speaking across captions or about other aspects of your work. Understand this going in as you open the door to an expanded conversation.
- All WGI Judges start as local judges and are comfortable speaking to all instructors, at all points of development and all points of view, with a focus on a variety of goals.

If competition is important, how can I best prepare for critique?

- The Instructor
 1. **Know the scoring system**– speak from an informed base.
 2. Try to watch your competitors as well as your own group and be honest in the qualities between your guard and these competitive neighbors.
 3. Listen to your commentary and make notes relative to questionable areas.
 4. Be specific, be clear, and take notes during critique.
 5. Be relaxed and in control of your fatigue, emotions and frustrations.
 6. Speak in a calm tone of voice and **listen** to the answers.

In the A Classes, factoring the RAW score will present challenges. Judges are to be accountable for both RAW & FACTORED results. This accountability will insure the quality of critique conversations for the A Classes.

What can instructors ask at critique?

- This is your time. All questions around the competitive process are possible.
- For clarification of any unclear comments.
- For input on why the judge rated and ranked your guard in their caption.
- Instructors can also offer insights to aid the judge's awareness in subsequent viewings. (If you see this judge in Finals, this is a very smart strategy...see below.)
- Questions concerning the comparative process are also expected and made more effective if you watched your competitors.

What are some examples of common questions from instructor to judge?

- You will see my team again in Finals, would you look for _____?
- We have limited rehearsal time. How should we focus that time to the greatest benefit towards our goal of _____?
- You didn't mention _____, which I consider a strength of ours. Would you look again considering that aspect tomorrow?
- What would you need to see in order to move our group into the next box third?

Critique is always after my Prelims performance. What should I know about the judge's job and how it may differ from their job in Finals?

- The Primary job of the Prelims judge is to rank and rate throughout the contest making sure they move the right groups into Finals (or next round of competition). Once the judge moves into Finals the judge is asked to rank and rate with as much specificity as possible. Their number should reflect the performance through profiling, and the relativity of placement and score through spreads.
- In critique, you can ask where you fit in that process and if any factors were deal-breakers in the decision. If you are a Finalist, you might ask for the potential for movement up or down given the ability of the judge to be more specific given the shift in focus and order of performance for Finals.

In the past, recaps were not available until after the Regional. What will be available for critique in 2023?

- For 2023, depending on population in rounds and ability to process recaps, Instructors will have a recap of either their round or full class.
- Judges will not have a recap until the Finals competition is completed. They have their personal tote sheets during critique conversations but will not know how you scored, how other judges scored you, or final finish order. This is important to know if you plan on comparative conversations in critique. They will know only their numbers. (Consider the GE station with 2 judges as you strategize.)

What information is important from my recap and how do I apply this to critique?

- Ordinals- These are your placements in each Caption and each Sub-Caption. This is your indicator of strengths and vulnerabilities compared to your competitors.
- Point differences- These indicate the judges spreads between you and your competitors (close or distant?), as well as the point differences between your own sub-captions (profiling). These are the indicators of your compatibility and the reflection of today's performance considering challenge versus achievements of/by the performers
- Your competitive neighborhoods in each Caption- Looking at close numbers to yours will give you a more clear idea defining your true competitors.
- Combining the info on the recap with the score sheet (found in Adjudication Manual)- On the back of the score sheet, see that each box is divided into thirds numerically. These thirds allow for more specific scoring from the judge. Judges use these thirds as numeric thresholds. These thirds can also define competitive neighborhoods if the instructor compares scores across their class/round of competition. Judges may score units close but units inside the same box thirds are considered direct competitive neighbors. There may be movement inside these specific groups from one day to the next. Having this information in-hand will help target and focus your points for discussion in critique.
- The more you get use to looking at your recap, the easier using its information to guide your critique choices becomes.
- Cross referencing your recap with the score sheet can help guide the most effective critique strategy. Judges will have a copy of the score sheet, but being armed with your own set of sheets will let all judges know you are informed and serious about your group's success.

Can I take all of the time to speak about my program with the expectation that judges only listen?

- Time is short and this is a viable option, but not without considerations. This does not excuse preparation and speaking from an informed viewpoint.
- Critique is your time and you decide the conversational style and focus. A Judge will not get in your way if you have a clear direction.
- Judges like instructors that take the lead and show initiative.
- Tone and word choice will be key to your message being heard.
- Having a judge not able to respond is the risk here. If your comments are worthy of remark then you ultimately want some type of confirmation that you are heard. I (Karl) feel judges are quick to show appreciation for authentic, passionate, speech (even tolerating my circular talking) if they feel you are being authentic and informed.
- You don't want to cross into diatribe! At that point you risk the approach of hostility. Once that line is crossed I would expect a judge to interrupt and stop you.
- Your chosen tone can make your voice heard and not heard...no matter the words. Check your motivation, intent, and what you hope to accomplish.
- If you have issues checking your tone (know yourself), then weigh the consequences of a potential misstep with this approach...There are fewer emotional safety nets.

Will judges hold it against me or my group if I choose not to go to critique?

- If you choose not to sign up, No! The judging day is very long and stressful. Groups choosing to not sign up is not a concern and is not discussed.
- **In 2023, while we are prioritizing the reintroduction of critique, if you sign up for critique and decide not to go, then you will forfeit your critique opportunities for the remaining part of the season.**

If I can't prepare for critique, should I go?

- If you signed up, you must go.
- Realize that a judge is there for a follow-up conversation based on thoughts they have already given you through their commentary. Not having listened to that initial commentary erases the premise for the follow-up conversation. Find a way to redirect the focus of the conversation.
- Establishing a relationship between you and the judge is important. These are professional working relationships between the unit (yourself) and the judge.
- If extenuating circumstances kept you from preparation, then be clear from the start. Have specific targeted questions ready, and whatever you do, don't say, "What did you think?" You can listen to what "they thought" once you are in the car. End with, "I'm looking forward to hearing your commentary!"
- There are times that recording quality causes commentary to not come out clearly, or perhaps the file is missing. In this case, let the judge know this as you sit down and ask them to help you through their notes. Most times, they are not aware of these issues.
- If your lack of preparation comes off as *choice* and not *circumstance*, the lack of investment in their work opens the door for a merited equivalent response from the judge. If you are indeed your unit's best advocate, this leaves the impression that the competitive process is not important to you, and that you are not invested in your own success. If this is the case and you can re-direct the conversation to suit your non-competitive needs, or delay your eventual effort, then make your intent clear from the onset.

What's the best thing I can do in critique?

- Get the judge invested in your group's future! WGI Judges are trained to be your partners in the competitive process. They are as essential as the units themselves and can work to be your advocate while you are on the floor and in future contest settings.
- Most critique conversations start with the judge defending their choices of the day. Using the wrap up to look to the future can help create the partnership for success that you are looking for.

Some ways to extend the conversation into the future:

- Give the judge an assignment for Finals. Have them look at a troubled spot from the day that you feel they can see differently (through explanation) after your critique.
- Give them a specific improvement to look for at Finals. Delivering on this promise will leave them with the impression that all future performances will be improved and that you and your group are capable of delivering on that expectation of improvement and excellence.
- Assure judges that some of their issues they see as vulnerabilities are issues that are already on your radar and that you have them scheduled

for fixing in the near future. Remind them that, though they may not see improvement in these moments for Finals (next day), they will surely see a big difference when they see the group in the future this season.

- Talk to your Regional Judge as though they are your Championships Prelims Judge. This will guide your choice in tone and approach and set you up for success while delivering a mutual respect for both parties in this relationship. You have to be serious about success in order to prove your group is deserving of it too!

What's the worst thing I can do in critique?

- Being confrontational and combative.
- As stated above, WGI Judges are trained to be partners in the competitive process. Treating a judge like an opponent places them in the role of opponent and creates an impasse to progress.
- Most of the times where instructors choose this approach, they leave with an initial false sense of satisfaction in that they have expressed themselves in a way that “forces their light” upon others. The assumption is that with an overly emphatic and threatening delivery comes an automatic understanding and a surrendering of any rational resistance. Seldom is the message actually received. Typically this leaves irreparable damage to the reputation of the instructor and a diminished willingness, by the judge, to see the unit differently in the future. That bell continues to ring past the rant itself.
- WGI Judges are asked to judge each contest with fresh eyes and to act as the units’ advocate while the performance is taking place. Experiencing a hostile critique does not excuse a judge from this expectation, but when contests are tight and decisions become nuanced, the assumption of a competitive advantage may become unreasonable.

Can Instructors get kicked out of critique?

- If a judge feels they are in a hostile environment, they are encouraged to stop the critique immediately.
- The Lead Judge may ask the instructor to leave and, depending on where they are in the rotation, pull the instructor and staff from finishing the critique opportunity.
- A report will be given to the Chief Judge and Director of Color Guard and actions will be determined.
- We instructors are free to make all of these choices but be reminded, these poor choices do not come for free. Hostile choices do not come without a cost.

Is there a recovery from a bad critique?

- A bad critique becomes your brand. It is only the next critique with the same judge that can shift any expected patterns.
- Repairing begins with an authentic ownership of the misstep without the transactional expectation of a clean slate.

What is an all-inclusive template for a good critique, considering before, during, and after?

Ideally ...

- Watch your unit from a judge perspective and be honest about your assessment of the performance.
- Watch your competitors.
- Before your time slot, listen to commentary, make notes, and create your critique strategy (factor the recap in your strategy if comfortable).
- Look at your recap so you have info that compares you to your competitors.
- Get to the critique site early so you can let the person at the door know that your unit is there. Many times it is possible to go earlier than your scheduled time as many groups run late and miss critique altogether.
- Once inside, you will be assigned a station (caption table). Have the first point ready ...no matter the table.
- As you sit- Say your Unit's name (this allows the judge to pull their notes on your group), then introduce yourself and introduce any other staff that may be speaking. It is critical that the judge know who is speaking and their role inside the unit. This is also the first step in building that relationship to carry you into the future.
- Let them know you have listened to their commentary and appreciate their time and effort. If you feel comfortable, follow up with, "I found it...." (helpful, curious, concerning...?).
- Beat the judge to the question, "What are your goals?" This will save you time from needless conversation based on a misunderstanding. This is also a trust-builder!
- Go straight to any point(s) that need clarification. This is any moment that sounded like it was important to the judge that doesn't make sense to you. Clear up confusion first.
- Next go to any point where you feel the judge may have misread the moment. Defend your choice and give background if needed, then allow the judge to defend their impression. It is important to ask the judge how much the moment in question influenced their ranking/rating choice. Follow up by asking them to look at that spot again tomorrow. (This conversation can potentially take all your time so be careful here. A judge understands time is limited and will understand if you feel you need to move on without resolve.)
- Next, (time is tight so you may have to weigh this against the above point) speak to any comparative issues you see when comparing your group to other groups in your competitive neighborhood. Assure the judge that you watched your competitors in question and that you have studied the recap. This type of conversation comes with a bigger obligation from the instructor. Without the preparation needed, the instructor's points can feel hollow. When poorly executed, this can be read as desperate point bargaining. If you choose this line, be prepared for a response and be ready to listen.
- Next, work towards your wrap-up and set up the future! Make one promise of improvement for tomorrow's performance in Finals. (Make sure you can deliver on that promise)
- Assure the judge that when they see you later in the season, you will have addressed their concerns of vulnerabilities (Lead them to believe that these are already on your list but scheduled for later) and that you will exploit any strengths they have noted. Even suggesting the delivery of a future improvement can give the impression of improvement. Get them on your side!
- If time remains- ask them if they have any questions for you.

- If you feel comfortable, reflect positively (as positively as you feel is honest) on the critique experience. If not positive, then at least be constructive, or skip this step.
- Thank them for their time and let them know that you are looking forward to seeing them again. If you need, remind them of your name. You want them to say your name! 'Build that relationship!
- Once out, make any notes of promises made or issues that need any follow up.
- If you feel it is needed, pull the Judge Evaluation Form and read through it to see if it is merited. Judge Evaluation Forms are reflections of your experience, they don't have to be limited to complaints or grievance.
- If left confused by terminology or a judge's point that didn't merit The Evaluation Form or a follow-up (or perhaps you weren't comfortable or confident), then reach out to a Steering Committee Instructor (wjicgsc@wgi.org) for clarification. They are your immediate advocates and will have an answer or direction! They may refer you to the FAQ packet for 2023.

FAQ – THE REGIONAL EXPERIENCE, AND POST REGIONAL FOLLOW-UP

Where do I go if I have another concern regarding my Regional experience?

It is the intent that the administration personnel handle all issues occurring at a WGI Regional on site.

- **Contest procedure issue:** Refer to the Contest Administrator, Director of Color Guard or WGI Representative
- **Penalty issue:** Refer to the Lead Judge at your show or if further follow-up is needed, contact the Director of Color Guard.
- **Scoring issue:** Refer to the Lead Judge at your show or if further follow-up is needed, fill out the online Color Guard Judge Evaluation Form. This will go directly to the Chief Judge and gain a response within the week.
- **Commentary issue:** Refer to the Lead Judge at your show or if further follow-up is needed, fill out the Color Guard Judge Evaluation Form. You will be able to attach the commentary in question to the electronic form.
- **Professionalism issue:** If pertaining to a judge refer to the Chief Judge through the Judge Evaluation Form or the Director of Color Guard. If pertaining to contest personnel refer to the Director of Color Guard and/or Executive Director.

Where do I go for additional help?

- Adjudication – Either the Lead Judge for the Regional or submit the online Judge Evaluation Form.
- Questions about the Judging System – Education Coordinator and Steering Committee Instructors. (see below)
- New for 2023- We realize that many instructor questions don't merit the Judge Evaluation Form. Many young instructors just want clarification on terminology or a specific judge comment that may be confusing. This year we are offering a way to ask the Color Guard Steering Committee Instructors general questions for the purpose of clarification and education. You may already know one of the members of the committee, and may be more comfortable speaking to a familiar voice. Each

member's e-mail address can be found on Page 20 of the Adjudication Manual. If you would like to submit it to the full committee for a response, e-mail your question to wgicgsc@wgi.org and one of the Steering Committee Instructors will get back to you with an answer or a resource. They may direct you to specific parts of the FAQ Instructor Packet or Adjudication Manual. Understand this is a resource for advice on contests and judging issues. They are not available for personal or group consultation through this service.

Other FAQ offered by the 2023 WGI Color Guard Steering Committee:

- FAQ – Captions and Scoring
- FAQ – Reviews and Reclassification

