



## OUR MISSION

The mission of WGI Sport of the Arts is to inspire and educate young performers around the world through unparalleled competitions and events with the spirit of inclusion, personal development, and community.

## OUR PURPOSE

WGI Sport of the Arts organizes high-energy and enjoyable events and experiences for color guards, percussion ensembles, and winds groups at the highest standard worldwide.

## WGI VALUES

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Excellence</b>  | and driving our participants and designers to achieve the highest performance standards                                       |
| <b>Teamwork</b>    | and collaboration with a positive and open attitude towards new ideas   |
| <b>Honesty</b>     | and transparency as essential in everything we do   |
| <b>Inclusivity</b> | for all participants and stakeholders, regardless of race, ethnicity, disability, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation |
| <b>Creativity</b>  | and driving our participants and designers to achieve the highest artistic standards  |
| <b>Safety</b>      | and protection for all participants and stakeholders  |



## CODE OF CONDUCT

WGI feels it is essential to enforce a Code of Conduct for groups participating in any WGI sanctioned event. If employees, independent contractors, and volunteers are expected to adhere to a professional code of conduct, then it is appropriate that this standard is expected from participating groups as well.

Definitions:

**Participant:** A person who is performing with a participating group.

**Staff:** A person who is engaged by a participating group in an instructional or administrative capacity.

**Volunteer:** A person who gives of their time freely to a participating group as a chaperone or provides support in any capacity.

All groups participating in any WGI sanctioned event must accept and act under the policies and procedures outlined within this Code of Conduct.

WGI will not tolerate conduct that impacts negatively on the organization or the experience of our performers.

All participants, staff, and volunteers should consider themselves as ambassadors of WGI. All parties are not only expected to uphold these policies but help remind others of them when necessary.

Further, WGI reserves the right to discipline, discharge or suspend participants, staff or volunteer who engages in or is alleged to have engaged in unlawful activity at a WGI sanctioned event to the extent consistent with applicable law.

### ALCOHOL & CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

WGI participants have the right to participate in an environment free of alcohol and controlled substances. WGI participants are not to possess, distribute or be under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances including, but not limited to, narcotics, inhalants, marijuana or other dangerous drugs. It is unlawful to bring alcohol and controlled substances onto any school grounds and most arena facilities.

### SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

WGI strictly prohibits all conduct which could pose a threat to the safety of participants of a WGI sanctioned event. If the participating group receives information of any kind (oral or written, "informal" or "formal") suggesting that misconduct has occurred that is connected in any way to individuals or activities associated with the participating group, and if the suggested misconduct meets any of the following criteria, then participating group shall inform WGI of the information in writing immediately:

- Any misconduct of a sexual nature or potentially classifiable as a sex offense under applicable law, including without limitation so-called "victimless" activities such as prostitution, pornography, and indecent exposure.
- Any misconduct in which actual or suggested sexual relations is an element.

- Any harassing conduct pertaining to, in whole or in part, an individual's sex, gender, sexual orientation, or gender expression.
- Any conduct involving harm to a minor.

Participating groups shall maintain effective internal policies and procedures for the protection and safety of its participants, staff, and volunteers, including without limitation the ability of any individual to report suspected misconduct to the leadership of the participating group without reprisal. Participating group shall conduct an effective internal investigation, report the matter to the appropriate external authorities as may be necessary, and take appropriate and effective remedial action under the circumstances.

Anyone found to have participated in misconduct that threatens the safety of a participant will be disciplined as WGI finds appropriate, up to and including a permanent ban from association with any WGI-sanctioned event in any capacity.

## **HARASSMENT**

Behavior that may be considered inappropriate or may be deemed as harassment is not allowed. Harassment refers to a full spectrum of offensive behavior. When the term is used in a legal sense, it refers to actions that can be found to be threatening or disturbing, and beyond those that are sanctioned by society. Conduct that creates a hostile environment is prohibited. Such conduct may include:

- Any harassing behavior about, in whole or in part, an individual's sex, gender, sexual orientation or gender expression
- Repeated unwanted sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Verbal comments about an individual's body
- Sexually degrading words used to describe an individual
- Unwanted physical contact
- Cyber-bullying or social media abuse
- Any other behavior that is not socially acceptable in a professional environment

Any participant, staff or volunteer who is found after an appropriate investigation to have harassed another participant, staff, employee, contractor, volunteer, or customer of WGI will be subject to appropriate disciplinary actions, including suspension.

## **ANTI-RETALIATION AND WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY**

In an effort to protect all interested parties and address our commitment to integrity and ethical behavior, WGI will not tolerate any retaliation against anyone who makes a good faith report, or threatens to make a good faith report, regarding WGI, another organization, or an individual, whose suspected violation of the law or other violation endangers the health or safety of a participant, any personnel of WGI or a participating group, or the general public.

## **GENERAL CONDUCT**

Our reputation depends on the conduct of all parties involved in WGI. Good manners, courtesy, and common sense are generally all that is required to ensure appropriate conduct and behavior. Conduct or language that could be perceived by a reasonable person as being rude, inappropriate, abusive, disorderly, derogatory, immoral or threatening will not be tolerated.

If an undue and unfair pressure is applied to WGI judges or staff through inappropriate behavior, then this places the competitive experience at risk. Examples include, but are not limited to, participants or staff of a group

verbally abusing WGI personnel, the inappropriate conduct of any participants or staff on the contest floor, or inordinate or unauthorized communication to judges or the Chief Judge.

Disruptive or rude behavior from participants, staff, or volunteers of one group towards another in the warm-up areas will not be tolerated.

Anyone found to have participated in misconduct will be disciplined as WGI finds appropriate, up to and including loss of the privilege that has been violated. For example, staff could lose all critique privileges with judges, barred from contest floor or venue, or loss of the right to use the warm-up venue.

## **SOCIAL NETWORKING**

WGI respects the right to use social networking sites and does not wish to discourage from self-publishing or self-expression. Nevertheless, we expect all involved in WGI to follow applicable guidelines and policies. All persons using social media should be clear that any posts are their own and they are not authorized to speak on behalf of WGI.

Our policies prohibit the use of social media to post or display comments that are vulgar, obscene, threatening, intimidating, harassing, or hostile on account of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, marital status, physical or mental disability, or any other basis or characteristic protected by applicable law on platforms controlled by WGI.

### **Additional Guidelines for WGI Employees & Contractors Using Personal Social Media**

- No communication is allowed privately or publicly via email, text, or on any social media streams or with any director, instructor, judge or participant about any competitive aspect of a participating group. This type of communication is strictly prohibited.
- WGI staff and judges should never comment on an individual group's anticipated or actual performance or anything of a competitive nature, however positive. Such postings create openings for questions from anyone reading the post. What seems like an innocent comment can be easily misconstrued.
- WGI staff and judges should change personal settings on Facebook to allow review and approval of any post visible to the public. Use caution on "liking" any post regarding any individual group or WGI.
- WGI staff and judges are prohibited from promoting any participating group with which they are affiliated so not to present the appearance of intended influence.
- WGI staff and judges should refrain from posting or liking any pictures or comments that imply favoritism towards any one group, instructor, circuit or region.
- WGI staff and judges should use caution in posting or "tagging" photos or videos of any color guard on your personal social media streams.

It is important to remember that anything posted on the Internet is permanent. Although it can be "taken down", it may well exist somewhere for years to come and often reach large numbers of people quickly. If misinterpreted or open to misinterpretation, such postings can do incalculable damage to the reputation of individuals, organizations, and WGI.

WGI will use these guidelines to determine whether an employee or contractor has been appropriate in their public online behavior with respect to their WGI-related responsibilities. Those employees and contractors

associated with WGI must represent appropriate conduct for a competitive, scholastic-based activity. Violation of these guidelines can lead to disciplinary action including suspension and/or termination.

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Individual participants, staff, or volunteers who are found to be in violation of this Code of Conduct will be subject to further investigation as conducted by WGI Administration. Based on the circumstances considered, the decision to apply disciplinary action or dismissal can be at the sole discretion of the Executive Director.

In extreme circumstances, termination of a group's participation in WGI may be considered if after a thorough investigation finds their management has recklessly or continually put participants, staff, or volunteers in unsafe situations or ignored flagrant violations of this Code of Conduct.

The type of action taken depends on the facts and circumstances surrounding each situation. Please note that the corrective action may vary, or steps skipped, depending on the circumstance. It's important to note that the type of action applied, as well as any prior notice of action, is at WGI's sole discretion.

The policies of this Code of Conduct should provide all participants, staff, and volunteers with an understanding of what is considered appropriate or inappropriate behavior. While all possible circumstances are impossible to delineate, those participating with WGI should not take any chance with the spirit and intent of these guidelines.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST (AFFILIATIONS)**

As a person employed or engaged by WGI, you are expected to work in the best interests of the organization at all times, as a disinterested and reasonable observer would view that interest in the circumstances. Impartiality and the perception of impartiality are critical to our success.

A conflict of interest exists when you take any action that is contrary to or interferes with the impartiality or the perception of impartiality of WGI's mission. A conflict of interest may be real, potential, or perceived. Accordingly, you must avoid and disclose all conflicts between the best interest of the organization and your own personal interests or personal relationships.

A conflict of interest also exists whenever a person employed or engaged by WGI may personally benefit either directly or indirectly, financially or otherwise, from their position in the organization.

You must disclose all actual and potential conflicts of interest promptly. It is your responsibility to comply with this requirement each time you become aware of a new conflict of interest or if any initial disclosure no longer accurately reflects the nature of the conflict of interest. In most cases, disclosure may be all that is required. If WGI determines that an actual conflict of interest exists, it will determine what additional actions are required by you to remedy that conflict and instruct you accordingly.

It is impossible to describe every potential conflict of interest. The vast majority of conflicts of interest will deal with adjudication but could also exist in other situations. However, to assist you in understanding and complying

with this policy, an illustrative, but not all inclusive, list of actual conflicts of interest follows:

- You personally are a designer, instructor, manager, or administrator of a group competing at WGI events.
- You have a family member, spouse, or significant other relationship that are employed or engaged with a group competing at WGI events.
- You receive compensation from a school music department or organization that sponsors a competing group (i.e. an individual who teaches music in the school when the music department sponsors a group)
- You have given an in-person consultation to a group in the current year. Online consultations sanctioned by WGI are allowed.
- You display a group's insignia while at a WGI event.
- You operate a business venture, are doing business for or being retained by a third party for services that conflicts with WGI. Employees, contractors, and volunteers may not use the intellectual property of WGI (ex. logo, judging systems, proprietary and non-public training materials) for personal financial benefit.

# PHILOSOPHY OF JUDGING

## TEACHER - COUNSELOR – CRITIC/PATRON

Judges are extremely close to the color guards they adjudicate, especially at a local level. They share in their growth and they take on the responsibility of giving them input for improvement. Sometimes judges talk directly to the performers and try to help them understand what is being asked of them. Unlike athletic referees or umpires, unlike the international championship judges, they are not isolated from the competitors they score. This fact brings us to take a long hard look at why they are judges.

In most cases they have come from this activity; it has given something tremendously important to them. Most have been performers or instructors. Some of them have felt the stinging indifference of a judge who didn't seem to care and vowed never to be like that. Others have felt the nurturing of some special person who went just a little beyond their duty and helped them to grow.

In any event, all judges are basically motivated to give something back to an activity that is special to them. In addition, they have a strong feeling for the performers. They share a common delight in watching them grow and develop into something special. And so, they come to the credo that becomes our philosophy of judging.

Clinics, seminars and proper study can teach the judge how to rank and rate. Examinations can determine technical skills. But there are other qualities just as important. Communication skills are essential. They communicate to the color guards in everything they do: the recorded commentary, any post-show follow-up and just casual conversation with instructors carries a need for well-developed communication skills. Judges must be professionals who do not employ sarcastic or rude dialogue to those whom they are adjudicating. Hurtful commentary is unnecessary and unacceptable. To convey boredom or indifference is unacceptable. Tone of voice is of paramount importance.

A judge functions on three levels. Guards with young inexperienced instructors require them to be teachers. With color guards at this level they will find many times when commentary will be clinics in basic technique. This must be done with patience setting a logical progression of development for the students to follow. They must offer encouragement when they are confused (which could be most of the time) and enthusiasm when they show some level of success. Remember that these beginners are where many judges were some 10 or 15 years ago. Deal with them in basic terms. Without encouragement and enthusiasm for their minor successes, growth could be impaired. The nurturing process at this level is of vital importance. At the Regional and Championship levels, commentary is focused on scoring relevance. Any advice to the instructor or students in terms of a "mini-clinic" should be limited to the wrap up and saved for the one-on-one conversations in critique. Judges must make sure that the comparative and adjustment process is given the time necessary, with extended "advice" to the instructor taking a lower priority.

At the second level they deal with color guards that have been around for a few years, felt some success and believe that they are ready to move to a higher classification. Here we find ourselves dealing with the adolescent of our activity - convinced of their expertise and often reluctant to accept the fact that they have anything to learn. At this point they find themselves in the role of "counselor". This role requires the most patience, the strongest concern and the greatest amount of effort.

It's hard to watch color guards at this level stumble and make mistakes. We encounter their impatience, their frustrations, and their absolute conviction that they are misunderstood and not appreciated. There could be some rough, heated moments during this time.

Finally, the student really does grow up and they see moments of brilliance emerge from his/her creations and one day they have it all together and in terms of creation, has surpassed the teacher, outgrown the counselor, and looks to them to be the art critic and patron (for surely, this is a work of art). At this point, they must challenge them; encourage them to set even higher goals and standards. They must be professional, concerned, and supportive.

The beginning judge should not enter the arena expecting to be all of these things at once. Our idiom is consistent in its attitude about rookies. Your first year in judging will be just like your first year of marching. There will be a thousand tests - technical, personal, emotional, intellectual. You will be expected to endure them all. You are there because you are bright, you are willing, and you care a great deal.

Align your involvement with the young beginning guards. Grow with them; be their teacher today so that in a year or so you can be their counselor and one day attain the level of critic as they emerge just as you will emerge fulfilling your goals and standards.

Our idiom has always demanded total commitment. Superior performers always give 100%. Superior judges must also give 100%. As judges, our disciplines and attitudes must be an extension of those of the performers. Judges expect the performers to be professional -- so must they be professional. Judges expect to be respected -- so must they respect the performers. Judges demand no less of themselves than is demanded of each performer.

A great teacher continually learns from their students; a great judge continually learns from the "instructors". Communication is a two-way street. Good color guards and good judges grow together by helping one another, by keeping communication lines open, and by setting mutual goals and standards for the activity.

Judges must judge with their head, with an empathetic heart, and in a positive, nurturing, and challenging manner as they contribute to the growth and development of this unique activity, and its' very special performers and designers!

Judges should...

**Encourage the A Class guards**  
**Appreciate the Open Class guards**  
**Learn from the World Class guards**



# THE COMPETITIVE GUARD AND SCORING

*A partnership among designers, performers & judges*

## **How Does Competition Benefit Us?**

- It sets a standard against which we can measure growth
- It motivates the participants to strive for higher achievement
- It prepares the students for the competitive challenges found in life

## **Classification: Understanding Each Class and Their Differences**

Proper classification is essential if we are to have a level playing field for all participants. There are five classes or levels of maturity for the guards to enter. Many local areas will have multiple sub-divisions within the Regional A and A Classes. They divide those large classes to provide a more equitable distribution of groups at a similar developmental level. These sub-divisions are all judged on the sheet that is appropriate for their level.

It is extremely important for all guards to place themselves in the proper class. This is of particular concern in local circuits where some guards re-group for the purpose of having a balanced number of groups in each of their local classes.

Color guards should make every effort to compete in the class for which they are most suited. Guards who may be competing in the wrong class could find that the scoring process will isolate them because this criterion is so strongly attuned to the curriculum involved in the developmental process.

## **Regional A Class – Beginning and Introductory Efforts and Achievements**

There is a broad spectrum of levels within the Regional A Class. Here we find performers who are experiencing their first set of skills at a body and equipment level and journey through the developmental levels that take them to the point where they are ready to move into the higher, more challenging A Class.

This class is unique because of the makeup of member guards. It is common to find groups ranging from elementary school age, intermediate school age and even beginning high school groups. In some instances, there could be a group with a varsity level in the A Class while these younger less experienced students comprise their Regional A guard. As a result of this, their ages range from as young as 7 or 8 to as high as 18 in the Scholastic Regional A Class and up to 22 years of age in the Independent Regional A Class. While the latter is not common for Independent Regional A guards, it nonetheless is a possibility.

Many circuits will offer multiple classes within the Regional A category to create a more equitable, level competitive field. As our activity grows, this class has become a large population for most circuits.

WGI does not offer competition at the World Championships for this class; however, they are welcomed at the Regional level of competition. Because of this, there is no formal review process for Regional A guards. This opens the class to a wider range of unintended possibilities. This makes the emphasis on basic tenants of each caption and the reward of achievement key to the judging process to maintain the intent of the class.

In the Regional A Class WGI emphasizes training. Reward is driven by the understanding and achievement of the principles of each caption. This emphasis on training should be accompanied by a limited vocabulary with priorities on establishing solid building blocks on which to develop the skills of the performers.

All score sheets offer a potential of 100 points (tenths) in each sub caption. Equipment and Movement sub-captions being factored in the tabulation process by the 60/140 ratio: 60 over 100 for Vocabulary, and 140 over 100 for Excellence. **These factoring percentages are new for the 2024 Season.** This maintains the intended emphasis on training and rewards those units that are strategic with an eye towards excellence and achievement. This tabulation factoring allows for the flexibility to shift these percentages as the Regional A class grows and becomes an integral part of WGI's performance opportunities in the future.

Training materials are available for Equipment and Movement judges to understand how numbers will be factored and the potential for shifts in ranking relative to this tabulation factoring. Judges are still expected to be accountable for their raw score as well as their factored score understanding the need for proper profiling to give the competitive edge to those units being strategic with an eye towards training and excellence.

Equipment and Movement scores in the Regional A Class will be given in two decimal places in anticipation of tighter spreads in vocabulary. This ensures that the judges' sub-caption ranking is intact through the factoring process. This extra decimal now shifts the tolerance for sub-caption ties away from the flexibility of recent years.

#### **Process for onsite reclassification at WGI Regionals concerning the Regional A Classes.**

- Those Regional A color guards that appear to be overtly misclassified may be reclassified into the A Class after their Preliminary performance.
- All considerations for this onsite reclassification must go through the Director of Color Guard.
- Those able to call for onsite reclassifications are the Director of Color Guard, Education Coordinator, Chief Judge, Steering Committee instructors, Lead Judge, and Contest Administrators.
- Without eliminating any qualifying A Finalists, the reclassified color guard will perform at the start of A Finals.
- The number of Regional A Finalists will not change because of color guard is reclassified.
- Any reclassified color guard performing in the A Class at a WGI Regional should also expect to be reclassified to the A Class in their local home circuit.

#### **A Class – Intermediate Efforts and Achievements**

The look of the A Class has changed significantly over the recent years. The natural evolution of the activity now yields shows and performers exploring a range of equipment and body skills beyond what was common a few years ago. You will see this reflected in the class descriptive at the top of the A Class score sheets. This class also has a broad spectrum of development within its population. Many circuits will divide their A Class membership into 'sub classes' to provide a more balanced competitive opportunity.

**Scholastic A** guards will typically range in age from 14-18 years. **Independent A** guards can range from any starting age up to 22 years. This variance creates a difference in the look between Scholastic and Independent A guards, mostly because of physical maturity and the accompanying skill level usually associated with issues

of physical strength. The Independent A guards will usually have a wider range of development from performer to performer making issues of training and experience key factors in the class. It is this developmental training factor that is the shared quality between the A classes.

Like the Regional A Class, the emphasis in A Class is on the understanding and achievement of the tenants and principles in each caption.

At the programming level, success is seen in choices that lead the performers understanding and achievement of excellence. Designers are sensitive to musical selections that offer clear guidelines for the performers to follow. Programming choices consider tempo, dynamic changes, and points of audio impact that help these younger performers develop their range of performance skills in all captions.

In this class, we look for some layering of equipment on body and some phrases done while traveling. Phrases will begin to lengthen, showing the performers' skills in this area. Standard tosses will typically top out at quads with an occasional individual who may be spotlighted with a more challenging aerial. When considering the Independent A Class, remember that skills focusing on strength can be slightly higher. Achievement must drive the reward for these choices.

Staging choices will provide the performers with the opportunity to show growing comprehension of challenging spatial relationships, speed/method of moving and orientation.

As the guards evolve within the class, they will add to their design and vocabularies' range taking on greater challenges as they prepare for the ultimate advancement into Open Class. At the higher level of A Class, students will be offered the opportunity to demonstrate some more challenging *Open Class* skills, typically in Equipment.

Like the Regional A Class, all score sheets offer a potential of 100 points (tenths) in each sub caption. Equipment and Movement sub captions being factored in the tabulation process by the 70/130 ratio: 70 over 100 for Vocabulary and 130 over 100 for Excellence. This maintains the intended emphasis on training and rewards those units that are strategic with an eye towards excellence and achievement. This factoring will allow for a more consistent approach for judges as we further distinguish the emphasis in all classes as they develop and change through the coming years.

Training materials are available for Equipment and Movement judges to understand how numbers are factored and the potential for shifts in ranking relative to this tabulation factoring. Judges are still expected to be accountable for their raw score as well as their factored score understanding the need for proper profiling to give the competitive edge to those units being strategic with an eye towards training and excellence.

Equipment and Movement Scores in the A Class will be given in two decimal places in anticipation of tighter spreads in vocabulary. This ensures that the judge's sub-caption ranking is intact through the factoring process.

## **Open Class – Advanced Efforts and Achievements**

This exciting class finds guards exploring greater challenges with emphasis on more complex equipment and body skills, set in more challenging programs. The maturity and training enforced through the A Class experience allow these guards to explore more demanding equipment and body vocabulary. Standard tosses will be higher, with the higher aerials most commonly fives in Scholastic Open and sixes in Independent Open. We can expect to see a greater variation on releases and catches as well as a more extensive blend between the equipment and the body. We also can expect to see extended phrasing on all pieces of equipment and the further development of traveling as vocabulary opportunities reflect the shift from ‘transition’ to connect events to ‘development’. As skills increase, so does the method by which skills are connected. You’ll notice a shift in the frequency of skills, connected in more challenging ways, that not only impact the range and variety of skills but also indicate an added depth to the vocabulary.

Open Class is where we see the growth in performer’s ability offering greater choreographic choices. We will expect to see this impact all captions, further separating these guards from their A Class counterparts. This shift in opportunity will challenge not only the students but designers and choreographers as well.

This shift in emphasis is reflected in the Open Class scoring system. Unlike the Regional A and A Class, the Open Class scoring system rewards vocabulary and excellence equally in the Equipment and Movement captions, encouraging the exploration of a broader range of vocabulary relative to the growing abilities of the Open Class performer.

Programming and design will show greater exploration into staging and a more developed connection to the audio and physical settings. Individual and group personality, role, characteristics and artistic nuance and details will be present and understood by the performers. The developing communication skills will lend greater effect to the performance of programs. Broader skills and choice will manifest in a range of stylistic identities as more designers, and choreographers work to be more unique and creative.

With the growing participation of several colleges, and in deference to the typical college students’ age, WGI’s maximum age for the Independent Open Class is 23. This allows all Independent Open Class students to compete for the duration of their college enrollment.

## **World Classes –Virtuosic Efforts and Achievements**

WGI has created separate score sheets for the two World classes. This was done to accommodate differences relative to physical development and performance maturity that have impacted the Equipment and Movement captions, as well as anticipated shifts in all captions for the coming years.

### **Scholastic World Class**

Scholastic World guard members will range in age from 14-18 years. Many times, they are the upperclassmen of their school including the most experienced performers. In these cases, we will notice more similarities in skillset and consistency in training from member to member.

Because most of these performers have been together for the duration of their high school years, we see more advanced skills throughout these programs in both equipment and movement. We also notice that skills are connected in more complex ways over longer periods of time.

More performance experience and training make choreographic and design options in this class greater than the other scholastic classes. As a result, expect stronger stylistic identities with a wider range of approaches. This variety can make comparisons in this class more challenging.

These guards have strong defined personalities and are highly creative and unique. Programs are designed to showcase their impressive body and equipment talent. Their depth of training and skills are strong and push the limits of the top of the scholastic classes as this class strives to set new standards.

### **Independent World Class-**

Since the removal of the maximum age in the Independent World Class, these groups have elevated the degree of difficulty in the blend of equipment and body set in innovative programs that explore the abstract as well as the literal story of their creations. The score sheet class descriptive in each caption reflects this:

*“Sophisticated challenges emphasize the physical and mental capabilities of these more mature performers.”*

Years of performer experience give designers expanded choreographic and design choices. The collective life experiences of these mature performers have opened the door to limitless programming options considering theme, premise, physical and audio settings. Strength and maturity in this class yield a performer confidence that is reflected in full-out communication of the roles they portray bringing a professional level of performance to the stage. Creativity and imagination are cornerstones in this class.

Separating the scoring sheets for the Independent World Class from the Scholastic World Class is the first step in recognizing the separate standards that have been seen over recent years and set the stage for more specific considerations in all captions in the future. This is reflected in the movement and equipment vocabulary criteria where the greatest challenges occur. In the comparison questions we ask:

*“Whose vocabulary contained the greater difficulty and risk?”*

This is intended for us to recognize and reward these considerations of depth when assessing the overall vocabulary and its achievement. Factoring the full range of depth will be key in this class as these performers experience has pushed their skill sets into the most extreme of skills. Assessing these skills singly without considering the frequency of skills within phrases and how they are connected, over extended time in challenging environments, would undervalue the accomplishments of these expert performers.

This class contains the legacy color guards where creative and technical staffs, as well as membership, have been together for many years. These years are spent developing and perfecting very specific processes, leading to an extended repertoire of skills and hyper-stylized approaches. These compositional and choreographic fingerprints lead to the strong creative identities delivering us the widest variety from unit to unit, creating the crown jewels of the activity.

When defining the standards for this class, we assume that choices are drawn from all possibilities, as this class strives to set new standards.

## COLOR GUARD STEERING COMMITTEE

Steering Committee Instructors are available to assist with how to express and direct a concern as well as any general questions on caption philosophy. These instructors act as peer advisors and are directly responsible for the shaping of judging philosophy. You can reach out to the Committee as a group using [wgicgsc@wgi.org](mailto:wgicgsc@wgi.org) or individually using the contacts below.

Questions on judge philosophy can also be directed to the Education Coordinator. He maintains the continuity of the judge philosophy over the years as Steering Committee membership shifts.

Assistance and advice to all color guards are available from both the Director of Color Guard Development and Education Coordinator.

The Chief Judge is available to instructors in his role as Lead Judge at any Regional and directly via the Color Guard Judge Evaluation Form. **Instructors may not initiate calls or emails to the Chief Judge.** Please see guidelines and process outlined in the section titled "How to Handle Judging Concerns" on the previous page.

**New for 2024** - There are 2 Judge Advisors to the Steering Committee that are not available to instructor questions. They will not be listed below.

Any administrative and contest concerns should be directed to the Director of Color Guard

### Steering Committee Instructors

Becca Anderson	<a href="mailto:B.Anderson@wgi.org">B.Anderson@wgi.org</a>
Louis Hellinger	<a href="mailto:L.Hellinger@wgi.org">L.Hellinger@wgi.org</a>
Geoffrey Sperling	<a href="mailto:G.Sperling@wgi.org">G.Sperling@wgi.org</a>
Rick Subel	<a href="mailto:R.Subel@wgi.org">R.Subel@wgi.org</a>
Andy Toth	<a href="mailto:A.Toth@wgi.org">A.Toth@wgi.org</a>

### Chief Judge

Curtis Costanza	<a href="mailto:curtis@wgi.org">curtis@wgi.org</a>
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### Education Coordinator

Karl Lowe	<a href="mailto:karl@wgi.org">karl@wgi.org</a>
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### Director of Color Guard

Dale Powers	<a href="mailto:dale@wgi.org">dale@wgi.org</a>
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## EVALUATION SYSTEM

All color guards will receive assessments along with commentary from a two judge system derived from the sheets designed by our Steering Committee for the 2021 virtual season. The Video submitted may be viewed multiple times by each judge.

All sheets in all divisions will have two sub-captions. One Judge will focus on **Program**. The other judge will focus on **Skills**.

Each sub-caption is assigned a numerical assessment corresponding to the “Box” the adjudicator assigns based on the performance.

Box 1 = 1 / Box 2 = 2 / Box 3 = 3 / Box 4 = 4 / Box 5 = 5

## HOW THE ASSESSMENTS WORK

The Judge will be asked to assess the level of success. To do this, each sheet separates degrees of success into 5 distinct levels, or “Boxes”. These Boxes will range from *Box 1*, rewarded to lesser success, to *Box 5*, which will be rewarded to groups meeting the highest criterion or the greatest standard for success in each class.

Each Box is attached to descriptors and percentages that reflect the groups understanding and ability to apply the concepts and principles of each sheet’s emphasis. The Judge will use these tools to help place a group in one of the 5 Boxes. The judge will do this for each subcaption resulting in 2 ratings on each sheet that reflect the group’s efforts in each subcaption’s focus. As we do in live contests, the Judge is asked to rate each caption separately with no assumption of equal value.

Both Judges award ratings in 2 subcaptions, giving the unit a total of 4 separate ratings. Those ratings are then sent to tabulation to be combined into a single rating. Each judge is focused only on his/her/their efforts and is not made aware of a group’s finished factored rating until judging is finished.

Box 1	Box 2	Box 3	Box 4	Box 5
Limited	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Consistently
0-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-89%	90-100%
Rating = 1	Rating =2	Rating=3	Rating=4	Rating=5

\* Assessments will be published on WGI.org after each event

It is important to understand that both judges will be viewing the same video submitted by each group. What we are used to calling “upstairs” and “downstairs” refer to separate view-points describing the proximity of the judge to the live performance. This does not apply in a virtual setting. Designers, Instructors, Videographers and Judges will need to understand that the view-point for both judges is the same. This may guide creative choices and choreographic strategies to facilitate a better viewing by the virtual judge- the single audience member!

Lastly, the video format and quality will ultimately contribute to the judges’ ability to perform. Judges have the ability to watch video performances multiple times if needed, but are urged to only judge what they see and not what they think “might be”.



**DESCRIPTION OF VIRTUAL CRITERIA AND PROCESS  
TO SUPPLEMENT THE 2024 ADJUDICATION MANUAL**

The 2024 Virtual Group Prelims/Finals will be assessed by 2 judges.

1 Judge will focus on Program.

1 Judge will focus on Skills.

The 2024 Virtual Group Preview will be assessed by 2 overview commentators. These overview commentators will give a full overview of the program.

It is important to note that the concept of combined captions for each sheet calls the judge to understand and apply principles from both captions, as described in the 2024 Adjudication Manual and Rulebook (for in person events). Though viewing and process will be different from live contests, the judge is still asked to adhere to the specific combined captions' lens.

The **Program** Sheet will emphasize the combined principles of the General Effect and Design Analysis captions.

The Judge will be asked to reward in 2 subcaptions – *Program and Performance*

The Program Subcaption is a holistic view of both the *Creation and the Blueprint*:

“The totality of Effect and Design components, and their relationships, over time, through the kinetic design and all creative efforts.”

The Performance Subcaption rewards the performers' role in the *Communication of the Idea*:

“The Performers' ability to understand and fulfill the Creation and the Design, so that both may be seen as one, then elevated through successful delivery to the virtual audience.”

The **Skills** Sheet will emphasize the combined principles of the IA Movement and IA Equipment Captions.

The Judge will be asked to reward in 2 subcaptions – *Vocabulary and Achievements*

The Vocabulary Subcaption is a holistic assessment of all *Equipment and Movement Skills*:

“The cumulative movement and equipment skills, the challenges presented by their connections, as well as the contexts within which the skills are presented.”

The Achievements Subcaption rewards the performers' *Degree of Excellence*:

“The successful execution of all equipment and movement challenges placed before the performers.”

## WGI VIRTUAL EVENT STARTING ANNOUNCEMENT

### GROUPS

WGI would like for each group to include the following announcement at the beginning of their performance.

“Presenting their program, \_\_\_\_\_, WGI Sport of the Arts  
Show Title

is proud to present \_\_\_\_\_.”  
Group Name

Groups, may select any individual to make this announcement. This individual should speak in a loud, clear voice; enunciating the words so that they will be heard on the recording. If you choose to do this announcement live (instead of having it added to your soundtrack), this individual should be as close to the recording device as possible so as to be heard prior to the start of the performance.

# WGI COLOR GUARD VIRTUAL CONTEST RULES

## 2024

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 directors/staff 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.

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### **1.0 ELIGIBILITY**

1.1 **Color guards in the Independent A Classes from the United States composed of performers not over 22 years of age as of 12:01 a.m. on April 1, 2024, shall be permitted to compete in contests governed by WGI. Independent Open Class color guards from the United States may utilize performers not over 23 years of age as of 12:01 a.m. on April 1, 2024. Independent World Class Color guards may compete with performers of any age. Each color guard appearing in a WGI contest shall be prepared to show proof of age. International independent color guards are not bound by any age limit** except for U.S. citizens performing with that group. U.S. citizens performing with an international group may not exceed the age allowed for that classification.

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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 color guard competing 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 scholastic color guards are defined as follows:

**Single School.** A color guard 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 color guard 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 color guard 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.
- Scholastic color guards utilizing students from parochial, vocational, or charter schools, must apply for approval under combined school guidelines.
- All color guards shall submit the Combined Schools Participating Group Master Agreement signed by the district superintendent and file with the WGI office.
- Color guards 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 color guard will be permitted to combine students from multiple schools. If application for combined schools is denied, the color guard has the option to either not include students from other schools or compete in an independent class.

1.3 Color guards may not compete with less than five (5) nor more than forty (40) performers in the competition area at any time.

1.4 Color guards must compete in the same or higher classification at WGI events as they do in their local circuit if the local circuit uses WGI scoring system. The basis for determination is the judging sheets a color guard is judged on locally regardless of classification.

***PENALTY: Disqualification - Any color guard 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 There are no space restrictions on the performance area to allow for maximum social distancing.

2.2 Performance space can be indoors or outdoors.

## **3.0 SCORING**

3.1 The elements in Virtual Color Guard to be judged are:

3.1.1 Group Skills, including sub-captions of Vocabulary and Achievements 50%

3.1.2 Group Program, including sub-captions of Program and Performance 50%

## **4.0 EQUIPMENT**

4.1 Definitions of authorized equipment:

4.1.1 Flags are defined as any material attached to a pike, pole, rod or staff other than an authorized weapon and used as a flag, with a minimum size of eight inches by twelve inches (8" x 12"). National colors must be at least three feet by five feet (3' x 5'). Flagpoles must be at least twenty-four inches (24") in length. (Curved and straight poles are acceptable; however, complete circles, squares, etc. to which material is attached are not flags. Material attached to chains, ropes or hoses are not considered flags.) The intent of this definition is to utilize a flag as a flag and not as a scenic element or a prop.

4.1.2 Rifles are defined as devices with the outward appearance influenced by a rifle. Rifles must be at least twenty-four inches (24") in length.

4.1.3 Sabres/swords are defined as those weapons that are a curved blade (sabre) or a straight blade (sword) and may be constructed of wood, plastic, metal or any other suitable material. Simulated sabres/swords must have either a hand guard or a hilt and must be at least twenty-four inches (24") in length.

4.1.4 Authorized equipment may be modified by the addition of visual items, however, attaching a flag, rifle or sabre/sword to a prop does not make the prop a flag, rifle or sabre/sword – it is still a prop. Timing and Penalty judges have the right to inspect and challenge guards for authorized equipment either before or after the maximum performance time with permission of the Contest Administrator.

Any questions on eligibility for authorized equipment should be submitted for approval by the Director of Color Guard.

4.2 Definitions of other allowed equipment:

4.2.1 Color guards may manipulate their soundboard by using a remote-controlled wireless device through a self-supplied network. A & Open Class devices must be battery operated as per rule 4.2.3. The soundboard/controlled device must remain in the competition area.

4.2.2 Performers playing musical instruments or singing using a 115/120-volt power source provided to allow amplification is permitted in the competition area.

4.2.3 World Class color guards may use any electrical device within their program deemed safe. The Director of Color Guard has the ultimate decision regarding safety of any electrical device in consultation with the Executive Director. Color guards should consult with the Director of Color Guard prior to using any equipment not specifically defined in these rules. Color guard will assume any liability for issues arising out of use of said electrical devices.

A & Open Class color guards may only use the electrical power sources provided as defined in Rule 4.2.4.

4.2.4 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.

4.3 The following are NOT ALLOWED in the Competition Area:

4.3.1 Pyrotechnics, discharge of arms, pressurized canisters, dry ice, smoke machines, compressed air apparatuses, dangerous materials, and/or flammable liquids or gas will not be permitted in or around the competition area.

4.3.2 Gasoline, electric or manual powered generators.

4.3.3 Live animals.

4.3.4 Helium, including helium-filled balloons.

4.3.5 Motorized vehicles such as golf carts, tractors, all-terrain vehicles, etc. Motorized wheelchairs for disabled performers will be allowed.

4.3.6 Glass objects that may break and/or leave shards of glass in the competition area. Video monitors must utilize screen protectors. Mirrors must be of the acrylic type and cannot contain glass. Any light bulbs used must be shatter resistant safety coated.

4.3.7 Drones or any remote-controlled airborne devices.

4.3.8 Hover boards.

Directors are encouraged to contact the Director of Color Guard to inquire about the use of particular equipment or materials when its permissibility under this section.

The Chief Judge, or Director of Color Guard 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: Disqualification for use of any prohibited equipment.***

4.4 The following safety guidelines are applicable to the construction, transport, and use of any prop or structure, at any WGI event or facility and to any performer, staff, volunteer, or parent who may be assisting in the construction or transport of the prop or structure. These guidelines are in effect during the entire time in the competition area, including setup and exit.

4.4.1 No participant may be placed on any portion of any prop or structure where the participant's lowest point of contact (i.e., feet, hands, etc.) is more than six feet (6') above the competition floor unless appropriate safety railing, safety harness, or protective padding is in place around prop, structure, or podium to prevent injury.

- Safety railing is a barrier at least forty-two inches (42") in height at all points and surrounding participant a minimum of 50%.
- Safety harness is a method to restrain a participant preventing or arresting a fall entirely a minimum of three feet (3') before contact with the competition floor.
- Protective padding is compressed foam padding (gymnastic mat type) or other suitable material measuring a minimum of two inches (2") in depth.

4.4.2 If a participant is placed on any portion of any prop or structure and the lowest point of contact (i.e., feet, hands, etc.) is more than six feet (6') above the competition floor, the following is required:

- If the prop or structure is in motion, the participant must actively use the appropriate safety railing or harness the entire time the prop, structure, or podium is in motion.

- If the prop or structure is stationary with a safety railing in place, the participant does not have to actively use the safety railing.
  - If the prop or structure is stationary with no safety railing, participant must be harnessed.
- 4.4.3 If a participant is placed on any portion of any prop or structure and the lowest point of contact is less than six feet (6') above the competition floor, no safety railing, harness, or padding is required for the prop or structure, whether stationary or in motion.
- 4.4.4 A participant executing a lift or stunt while atop ANY prop or structure may not lift another participant above six feet (6') in height above the competition floor unless protective padding or other adequate safety precautions are in place
- 4.4.5 Participants are prohibited from jumping or leaping off any prop or structure that exceeds six feet (6') in height above competition floor unless protective padding or other adequate safety precautions are in place.
- 4.4.6 WGI shall at all times have the final authority to prohibit the use or prescribe additional safety requirements of any prop or structure that presents an unreasonable or unacceptable risk of injury or harm to participants or others or potential danger to a competition venue or its property.

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

***PENALTY: Ten-point (10.0) penalty to Disqualification at the discretion of the Director of Color Guard, including (but not limited to) prohibition of the use of the over height/unsafe prop(s).***

## **5.0 TIMING**

- 5.1 No minimum performance time or equipment time requirements in virtual events.
- 5.2 Maximum performance times are as defined as:

<b>Color Guard Class</b>	<b>Color Guard Maximum</b>
<b>JUNIOR</b>	4.5 min
<b>REGIONAL A</b>	4.5 min
<b>A CLASS</b>	5.5 min
<b>OPEN</b>	6.5 min
<b>WORLD</b>	7.5 min

- 5.3 Timing for the “maximum performance time” will begin with the first step of body movement, first move of equipment or the first note of music whichever comes first after the announcement ends. Judging will also begin at this time. The end of the maximum performance time is at the obvious conclusion of the show. All captions will be judged until the obvious conclusion of the show.

## **6.0 VIDEO PROCEDURE**

- 6.1 Videos must be one take – spliced footage will not be accepted.
- 6.2 Viewpoint should be from an elevated perspective. Zooming in or moving camera is not permitted.
- 6.3 Audio microphone placement is not restricted. Color guards may want to add an audio feed to their recordings.
- 6.4 You will be required to upload your videos for each show separately to FloMarching. Information on how to upload will come at a later date. Use of a more recent performance video for each contest is allowed, but not required.
- 6.5 All videos must be uploaded by the video upload deadline date or the group will forfeit their entry fees and the entry will be disqualified.
- 6.6 The program must own rights to this video (recorded it yourself) and consent to it being posted on FloMarching for use in this Virtual Competition and to WGI for use in any advertising or educational purposes.

## **7.0 PENALTIES**

- 7.1 Any color guard 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 Executive Director.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 Groups using the flag of the United States should follow the [U.S. Flag Code](#). Directors are encouraged to contact the Director of Color Guard for guidance prior to performance.

***PENALTY: Denial of performance or possible disqualification as determined by the Executive Director in consultation with the Director of Color Guard.***

### **Advancement to Virtual Finals**

The top 10 assessments in each class at each event will advance to the virtual finals event.

If the 10th highest assessment is in a tie with other color guards, all color guards with the 10th highest assessment would advance to the virtual finals event.

### **Additional Information**

If a color guard is entered in the in-person WGI World Championship, the color guard will only receive commentary and will not be considered for advancement in the virtual final event.

Assessment results from the prelim event will be posted on wgi.org. No ordinals or scores will be posted from prelim events.

The virtual finals event will announce and post the ranking of the virtual finals color guards in each class. No scores will be announced or posted.