

WGI PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE CONTEST RULES 2025

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.

WGI strongly recommends that all participants wear protective footwear while outside the performance area.

1.0 ELIGIBILITY

- 1.1 Percussion ensembles 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, 2025**, shall be permitted to compete in contests governed by WGI. Each percussion ensemble appearing at a WGI contest shall be prepared to show proof of age. International independent percussion ensembles are not bound by any age limit.
 - 1.1.1 U.S. Military veterans may be granted one (1) year of eligibility immediately following their end of active service. To qualify, individuals 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. Veterans must submit a copy of their discharge papers and separation documents to WGI prior to December 1 to qualify.
- 1.2 All participants of any percussion ensemble 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 percussion ensembles are defined as follows:

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

1.3 No percussion ensemble may compete with less than five (5) participants on the floor of competition at any time including the student conductor (optional).

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

PENALTY: Disqualification – any ensembles violating any requirements in the ELIGIBILITY section shall be disqualified from that contest and must forfeit any scores, placements or awards

2.0 COMPETITION AREA

2.1 For the purpose of interpretation, the “competition area” shall measure a minimum of sixty feet by ninety feet (60’ x 90’) and does not include entry ramps, hallways, bleachers or seating areas. Percussion ensembles 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) to be made available to all competing percussion ensembles to identify the competition area. No competition area may exceed the maximum size of the competition area (72’ x 106’) offered at the world championships. While the competition area will be increased whenever possible, all percussion ensembles must be prepared to perform within a minimum sixty-foot by ninety-foot (60’ x 90’) competition area.

2.2 All WGI contest sites must have a minimum of seventy feet by one hundred feet (70’ x 100’) to accommodate a “safety zone” of five (5) feet from any spectator seating. This will ensure the minimum sixty-foot by ninety-foot (60’ x 90’) competition area within the minimum seventy feet by one hundred feet (70’ x 100’) of the contest 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. No penalties shall be assessed for broken sticks, mallets, or hardware falling over the front boundary accidentally.

- 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.
- 2.5 All floor coverings (tarps) must fit in the designated competition area at each particular contest site and cannot enter the safety zone or cover the front boundary line.
PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty shall be assessed for each participant or piece of equipment in violation of the competition area boundary. (2.3-2.5)
- 2.6 The center of the front boundary line shall be marked by a taped line at the front and back of the competition area. The outer edges of the competition area shall also be marked with taped lines at the corners to designate the safety zone.
- 2.7 110-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. Ensembles may not plug into any wall outlet in the competition area and must provide their own extension cords.
- 2.8 Power sources must be dedicated for ensemble use only and have no other electrical devices using designated power sources.

3.0 SCORING

- 3.1 The elements in Marching Percussion 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 = Ten percent (10%)
Performance Quality = Ten percent (10%)*
 - 3.1.5 Timing and Penalties = Penalties assessed per rules
- 3.2 The elements in Concert Percussion 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 Artistry = Fifty percent (50%), one judge
*Program = Twenty percent (20%)
Fulfillment = Thirty percent (30%)*
 - 3.2.3 Timing and Penalties = Penalties assessed per rules
- 3.3 The Music judge will be positioned low in the stands. The Artistry, 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 facilities, especially wooden competition floors and easements, all equipment and props must be properly prepared to assure that damage to the facilities will not occur. All equipment will be subject to inspection. Any damage to the facility that may occur (dragging the timpani, wheels on carts locking, improperly prepared equipment, etc.) will be the responsibility of the ensemble.

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

- 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 points (10.0)

- 4.3 Definitions of authorized equipment:

- 4.3.1 Ensembles may manipulate their soundboard by using a remote-controlled wireless device 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 adjust the mix using wireless technology. The soundboard 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 soundboard needs adjustment.

- 4.3.2 Ensembles 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 Executive Director. Ensembles should consult with the Director of Percussion prior to using any equipment not specifically defined in these rules. The ensemble 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.

- 4.3.3 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 are NOT allowed in the performance venue:

- 4.4.1 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.

- 4.4.2 Gasoline or manual-powered generators

- 4.4.3 Live animals

- 4.4.4 Use of powder, dirt or any other substance that lingers in the competition area past the interval time

- 4.4.5 Use of helium, including helium-filled balloons

- 4.4.6 Motorized vehicles such as golf carts, tractors, all-terrain vehicles, etc.

4.4.7 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.

4.4.8 Drones or any remote-controlled airborne device

4.4.9 Hoverboards

PENALTY: Ten-point (10.0) penalty or Disqualification for use of any prohibited equipment

4.5 Signal jamming devices – including, but not limited to, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and cellular – may not be used.

PENALTY: Disqualification

Directors are encouraged to contact the Director of Percussion to inquire about the use of particular equipment or materials when its permissibility under this section or at specific sites may be in question.

The Percussion Administrator, Contest Administrator, or Director of Percussion 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.

4.6 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/robotics need adjustment.

4.7 Any special effect lighting must be approved in advance by Director of Percussion.

PENALTY: Ten-point (10.0) penalty

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

4.8.1 No participant may be placed on any portion of any prop, structure, or podium where the participant's lowest point of contact (i.e., feet, hands, etc.) is more than four feet (4') 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 the 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.

4.8.2 If a participant is placed on any portion of any prop, structure, or podium and the lowest point of contact (i.e., feet, hands, etc.) is more than four feet (4') above the competition floor, the following is required:

- If the prop, structure, or podium 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, structure, or podium is stationary with a safety railing in place, the participant does not have to actively use the safety railing.

- If the prop, structure, or podium is stationary with no safety railing, the participant must be harnessed.
- 4.8.3 If a participant is placed on any portion of any prop, structure, or podium and the lowest point of contact is less than four feet (4') above the competition floor, no safety railing, harness, or padding is required for the prop, structure, or podium, whether stationary or in motion.
- 4.8.4 A participant executing a lift or stunt while atop ANY prop, structure, or podium may not lift another participant above four feet (4') in height above the competition floor unless protective padding or other adequate safety precautions are in place
- 4.8.5 Participants are prohibited from jumping or leaping off any prop, structure, or podium that exceeds four feet (4') in height above the competition floor unless protective padding or other adequate safety precautions are in place.
- 4.8.6 When a participant is on a prop or structure with wheels of any height, wheel locks/brakes shall be engaged to prevent movement while stationary.
- 4.8.7 Participants may not be placed on any portion of any prop or structure where the lowest point of contact is more than 20 feet (20') above the competition floor.
- 4.8.8 WGI shall at all times have the final authority to prohibit the use or prescribe additional safety requirements of any prop, structure, or podium 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 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: Ten-point (10.0) penalty to Disqualification at the discretion of the Percussion Administrator, including (but not limited to) prohibition of the use of prop, structure, or podium

5.0 TIMING

5.1 Percussion ensembles 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.
- 5.3 Each percussion ensemble, with all competing participants, shall remain in the competition area and be judged in all captions for a minimum of four (4) minutes.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 Percussion ensembles cannot be required to perform before the time set in the most recent contest schedule.

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

- 5.6 Any percussion ensemble unable to make their scheduled performance time will be rescheduled to perform during the next most logical performance slot in their class. Schedule adjustments will be made at the discretion of the Contest Administrator.

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

- 5.7 Any ensemble creating a delay in the schedule will be subject to penalty.

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

- 5.8 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 announcement ends. Judging will also begin at this time.

6.0 ENTRY

- 6.1 All participants must enter the competition area through the designated entry door, tunnel, or ramp. Prior to the actual start of the performance time, the percussion ensemble may utilize the 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 be able to fit through the designated entry door, tunnel, or ramp. No timing exceptions will be made for oversized props. Props will not be allowed in the competition area before the ensemble’s performance time.

- 6.3 The ensemble will line up at a ready line to be designated by the Contest Administrator to enter the competition area.

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

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

- 6.5 Once the performance begins, all participants must remain in the designated competition area for the entire performance. Boundary line violations (including first aid cases) do not constitute permanently leaving the floor.

PENALTY: Five-tenths of a point (0.5) penalty for each participant failing to remain in the competition area for the entire 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/or props must clear the vertical or horizontal centerline at the conclusion of interval time. The timing line shall be for visual use by the Timing and Penalties judge and not designated by tape.
- 7.4 For purposes of timing, equipment and props are considered removed when they cross the vertical or horizontal centerline. After crossing the timing line, all equipment and/or props must continue to make forward progress out of the competition area in a timely manner or receive a penalty at the discretion of the Timing and Penalty judge.

PENALTY: Half of one-tenth of a point (.05) penalty per second

- 7.5 There will be no flying of tarps (also known as “ballooning”) to clear the floor at the conclusion of an ensemble’s performance.

PENALTY: Disqualification

8.0 PENALTIES

- 8.1 Timing and Penalty judges will assess all penalties for infractions that take place in the competition area. Contest Administrators may not waive competition area penalties. An ensemble has a right to challenge any penalty in consultation with the Percussion Administrator, Director of Percussion, or Executive Director but any final decision regarding penalties will remain with the Timing and Penalty Judge. All penalties will be posted for ensembles via CompetitionSuite. Challenges must be made to the assigned percussion administrator via text prior to the posting or announcing of scores.
- 8.2 Any ensemble 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 points up to disqualification at the discretion of the Percussion Administrator, Director of Percussion, or Executive Director.
- 8.3 All timing penalties shall be 0.05 points per second. All boundary penalties shall be 0.1 points per offense.
- 8.4 During a performance, non-performing personnel may not coach, cue, etc., any participants or control any wireless lighting or robotic events outside the competition area. As per rules 4.3.1 and 4.6, staff members may communicate via text messaging with a designated participant controlling a soundboard, lighting, and robotics.

PENALTY: One point (1.0) to Disqualification at the discretion of the Timing and Penalties judge

- 8.5 All programs, soundtracks, thematic and costuming choices must reflect the qualities that would be acceptable for performance at a scholastic venue or suitable for marketing to sponsors on a national level.
- 8.6 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 Executive Director in consultation with the Director of Percussion.