

# WGI WINDS COMPETITION 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.

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### **1.0 ELIGIBILITY**

- 1.1 Winds groups in the Independent Class may compete with participants of any age.
- 1.2 All participants of any winds group 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 winds groups are defined as follows:

**Single School.** A winds group whose total membership are students from the same school, schools that feed directly into that school, or home-schooled students that reside within the school district boundaries. The winds group shall submit the Single School Participating Master Group Agreement signed by the authorizing school principal or administrator and file with the WGI office.

**Combined Schools.** The purpose of the combined schools policy is to encourage participation from scholastic groups that may have limited resources while keeping the integrity of the scholastic classes intact. Combining schools for the purpose of competitive advantage is contrary to this policy and will not be approved.

A winds group 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 name.
- Scholastic winds groups utilizing students from parochial, vocational, or charter schools, must apply for approval under combined school guidelines.

- All winds groups shall submit the Combined Schools Participating Group Master Agreement signed by the district superintendent and file with the WGI office.
- Winds groups 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 winds group will be permitted to combine students from multiple schools. If application for combined group is denied, the winds group has the option to either not include students from other schools or compete in an independent class.

1.3 Winds groups must have a minimum of five (5) participants at any time including one optional member conductor.

***PENALTY: Disqualification – any winds group 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 area. Winds groups are permitted to utilize the entire designated competition area for their performance. All participants must be in the designated competition area when performance time begins, except an optional conductor. 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 marching winds groups to identify the competition area. No competition area may exceed the maximum size of competition area (72’ x 106’) offered at the world championships. "While the competition area will be increased whenever possible, all marching winds groups 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. An optional conductor may be located in a designated place in the stands. An optional conductor may be located in the competition area or in a designated place in the stands, usually in the center aisle. If there is no aisle, the Contest Administrator will designate a space in the seating area. Conductor is limited to one (1) individual. The conductor, if located in the stands, must remain for the entire performance. No personnel may cross the front sideline once the performance has begun.

2.4 The front boundary line shall be considered to extend the full width of the competition area and shall be clearly marked at a minimum of five (5’) feet from the first row of spectator seating.

***PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty shall be assessed for each member for each boundary violation of the competition area***

- 2.5 The center of the front boundary line shall be marked by a six (6") inch taped line at the front and back of the competition area. The outer edges of the competition area shall also be marked by six (6") inch-taped lines at the corners to designate the safety zone.
- 2.6 All floor coverings (tarps) must fit in the designated competition area at each particular contest site and cannot enter 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. Groups 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 winds groups use only and have no other electrical devices using these designated power sources.

### **3.0 SCORING**

- 3.1 The elements in Winds to be judged are:
  - 3.1.1 Music Analysis = Thirty percent (30%), one judge  
*Composition = Fifteen percent (15%)*  
*Achievement = Fifteen percent (15%)*
  - 3.1.2 Visual Analysis = Thirty percent (30%), one judge  
*Composition = Fifteen percent (15%)*  
*Achievement = Fifteen percent (15%)*
  - 3.1.3 Overall Effect = Forty percent (40%), one judge  
*Repertoire Effectiveness = Twenty percent (20%)*  
*Communication Effectiveness = Twenty percent (20%)*
  - 3.1.4 Timing and Penalties = Penalties assessed per rules
- 3.2 All three judges will be positioned higher in the audience viewing area. The Timing and Penalty judge will be positioned in the competition area.

### **4.0 EQUIPMENT & INSTRUMENTATION**

- 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 of 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 group.  
  
***PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty per point of contact for each piece of equipment.***
- 4.2 Definitions of authorized equipment:
  - 4.2.1 Instruments typically utilized and recognized as part of a band or orchestra, including electronic instruments, are allowed as well as visual only participants such as color guard.
  - 4.2.2 Winds groups may control their soundboard by using a remote-controlled wireless device through a self-supplied wireless network. WGI will provide an area in or near the upstairs judging area for one designated staff member to control the device using

wireless technology or communicate to a participant running the sound board via wireless voice/two-way radio. The use of this area is recommended, but not required. The soundboard must remain in the competition area. A participant in the competition area must control all lighting and robotic devices.

- 4.2.3 Any sound generating source, computer, synthesizer, etc. must be located in the competition area. This equipment must be run by a performing member of the group who is in the competition area. In Independent Class, a titled staff member may run the soundboard since there are no age restrictions.
- 4.2.4 All electronic sounds are permitted except the direct and simultaneous duplication of wind parts that exist within the group's wind score by similar electronic voices.
- 4.2.5 Winds groups may use any electrical device within their program deemed safe by the Contest Administrator. The Contest Administrator has the ultimate decision regarding safety of any device in consultation with the Director of Winds and/or Executive Director. Groups should consult with the Director of Winds prior to using any equipment not specifically defined in these rules. Group will assume any liability for issues arising out of the use of said electrical devices.
- 4.2.6 Battery operated devices using common off the shelf flashlight batteries (AA, AAA, AAAA, C, D, N, 9V, button cells) and dry-cell secondary "rechargeable batteries" including cell phones, cameras, MP3 players and computers are allowed. Sealed, spill-proof maintenance-free lead-acid batteries such as gel cell, sealed lead-acid (SLA), valve regulated sealed lead-acid (VRLA), and absorbed glass mat (AGM) batteries are also permitted.

***PENALTY: Ten-point (10.0) penalty to Disqualification at the discretion of the Timing and Penalty judge.***

- 4.2.7 One titled unit staff member may enter the safety zone and/or competition area at any point during the performance time to attend to an issue affecting the safety of participants/spectators/staff or respond to catastrophic equipment failure, loss of power, or connectivity to a sound system. A penalty for this boundary violation will be assessed by the Timing and Penalty Judge, but is subject to mandatory review and possible removal by the Contest Administrator with the advisement of the Wind Administrator if present.

***PENALTY: One point (1.0) per titled unit staff member entering the safety zone and competition area (subject to Contest Administrator removal)***

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.
- 4.3.2 Gasoline or manual powered generators.
- 4.3.3 Live animals.
- 4.3.4 Powder, dirt or any other substance that remains on or in the air of the competition area past the interval time.
- 4.3.5 Helium, including helium-filled balloons.
- 4.3.6 Motorized vehicles such as golf carts, tractors, all-terrain vehicles, etc. Motorized wheelchairs for disabled participants are allowed.

- 4.3.7 Objects that may break and/or leave shards of glass in the competition area. Mirrors must be of the acrylic type and cannot contain glass. Any light bulbs used must be shatter resistant safety coated.
- 4.3.8 Drones or any remote-controlled airborne devices.
- 4.3.9 Hoverboards.

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

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

**PENALTY: Disqualification**

- 4.5 Any special effect lighting must be approved in advance by the Director of Winds.

**PENALTY: Ten-point (10.0) penalty**

- 4.6 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.

- 4.6.1 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 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.

- 4.6.2 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, participant must be harnessed.

- 4.6.3 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.

- 4.6.4 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
- 4.6.5 Participants are prohibited from jumping or leaping off any prop, structure, or podium that exceeds four feet (4') in height above competition floor unless protective padding or other adequate safety precautions are in place.
- 4.6.6 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.
- 4.6.7 Participants may not be placed on any portion of any prop or structure where the lowest point of contact is more than twenty feet (20') above competition floor.
- 4.6.8 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 Winds to inquire about the use of particular equipment or materials when its permissibility under this section or at a specific site may be in question.

The Contest Administrator and/or Chief Judge 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: Ten-point (10.00) penalty to Disqualification at the discretion of the Contest Administrator, including (but not limited to) prohibition of the use of the overheight/unsafe prop(s).***

## **5.0 TIMING**

5.1 Winds groups will be timed to compete at intervals according to class.

Class	Interval Time	Minimum Performance Time	Maximum Performance Time
World Class	11 minutes	4 minutes	8 minutes
Open Class	10 minutes	3.5 minutes	7 minutes
A Class	9 minutes	3 minutes	6 minutes

5.2 Interval time will include entrance, setup, performance, exit and removal of all participants, props, floors and equipment. Interval time will end by clearing the vertical or horizontal centerline at the conclusion of performance.

5.3 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.

5.4 Winds groups 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***

5.5 Any winds groups 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.***

## **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, winds group 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 designated entry door, tunnel or ramp***

- 6.2 All props must be able to fit through 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 group's performance time.

- 6.3 Any winds group 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.***

- 6.4 The winds group will line up at a ready line to be designated by the Contest Administrator to enter the competition area.

- 6.5 Authorized equipment and/or props may be placed anywhere in the competition area by 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 competition area prior to performance time***

- 6.6 Winds groups may include a playing entrance as part of the performance following introduction. Groups may warm-up as part of the floor set-up.

- 6.7 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.

- 6.8 Once the performance begins, participants must remain in the designated competition area for the minimum performance time as designated in Rule 5.1. Participants may not re-enter competition area during the performance time once they have exited until after performance has concluded.

***PENALTY: Five-tenths of a point (0.5) penalty for each participant failing to remain in competition area for the entire performance.***

- 6.9 The front boundary line is inviolate at all times except for participants involved in entrance set up or tear down at the end of the performance. Boundary line violations (including first aid cases) do not constitute permanently leaving the floor. No penalties shall be assessed for broken sticks, mallets or hardware falling over the front boundary accidentally.

***PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) penalty for each member per front boundary violation***

- 6.10 Floor coverings (tarps) may not cover the front boundary line at any time.

***PENALTY: Two-point (2.0) penalty***

## **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 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 floor at the conclusion of a group’s performance.  
***PENALTY: Disqualification***

## **8.0 PENALTIES**

- 8.1 Timing and Penalty judges will assess all penalties for infractions in the competition area. Contest Administrators may not waive competition area penalties. The judge must document the reason, approximate location, and time for any penalty during the interval time for the group.  
  
It is always the responsibility of the group representative to identify penalties post-performance. If the group representative fails to initiate a penalty inquiry with the Contest Director within fifteen (15) minutes of the penalty notification, the group will forfeit its right to any inquiry and the penalty will be considered final and not subject to further review. The final two groups in any round or class must check in with the Timing and Penalty judge while exiting the competition area as they may not have the full fifteen (15) minutes before final score submission  
  
If an inquiry is requested, the Contest Director will consult with the Timing and Penalty judge to confirm the penalty details and respond to the group via text or arrange an in-person meeting, if necessary. No video recordings will be used during any inquiry. Once the inquiry is complete, the group representative will be notified via text of the final decision. The final determination on any penalty rests with the Timing and Penalty judge.
- 8.2 Any winds group violating any rule or part of a rule, breaching standard contest etiquette or failing to comply with directions from contest personnel for which no specific penalty is provided, shall be penalized for each such violation, not less than 0.1 point up to disqualification at the discretion of the Chief Judge, Contest Administrator, Director of Winds or Executive Director.
- 8.3 All timing penalties shall be .05 points per second. All boundary penalties shall be 0.1 points per offense.
- 8.4 During a performance, adult or non-performing student personnel (other than the designated conductor) may not coach, cue, etc., any participants or control any wireless lighting events outside the competition area.



***PENALTY: One-tenth of a point (0.1) 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 Winds for guidance prior to performance.

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