

North Texas Colorguard
Association
Policies and Procedures
Manual

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the North Texas Colorguard Association to provide all of our units with an educationally sound competitive environment. We wish to build strong relationships with school administrators, band directors, unit directors, parents, and students. It is our goal to promote the winterguard and indoor percussion activities in North Texas, and provide opportunities for all interested parties to learn from each other as well as compete against each other in friendly and fair venues. It is our pledge to nurture and educate our younger units, encourage our intermediate units, and help prepare our more advanced units for competition at a national as well as local level. It is our goal to meet the competitive needs of each of our units, helping them to grow as performers, team members, and most importantly, contributing members of society who recognize the positive impact that the pageantry arts and other performing arts have on our communities.

BRIEF HISTORY

The North Texas Colorguard Association (NTCA) was founded in 1993, with the first competitions taking place in the spring of 1994. The founding members wanted to have a circuit based in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. This particular circuit was aimed at providing a band director friendly environment with education-based competition. Although participation was welcomed by senior and independent classes, the focus of the circuit was toward smaller, scholastic groups wanting to participate at a local level. The growth in North Texas has been tremendous, and the circuit now has well over one hundred competing units from both winterguard and indoor percussion.

WINTERGUARD INTERNATIONAL

Winterguard International (WGI) is the governing body, which sanctions competitions at the regional, national, and international levels. WGI publishes an annual Adjudication Manual and Rule Book for both colorguard and percussion. NTCA follows these two manuals exclusively as they relate to caption judging/criteria referenced sheets, timing and penalties, code of ethics, and competitive flag code. All other business brought forth to the NTCA follows the NTCA adopted Articles of Association, By-Laws, and Policies and Procedures Manual, which includes its appendix and the How to Host a Contest literature.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the North Texas Colorguard Association is available to any scholastic or independent colorguard or percussion unit that wishes to participate in indoor competitions based in the Dallas/Fort Worth/Metroplex area. Membership information can be found in Article II of the NTCA Bylaws.

DUES

Information about dues can be found in Article III of the NTCA Bylaws. The current, nonrefundable membership fee is \$350.00 per unit, per year. The fee for a second like unit (second guard from the same school or independent organization or second percussion line from the same school or independent organization) is \$300.00 per unit,

DECLARING A CLASSIFICATION

Winterguards and Percussion units will be classified by WGI standards. It is up to the unit staff to make the decision as to what class best suites their unit's ability and growth potential.

CLASS/SCORE SHEET DESCRIPTIONS

Cadet Class (Cadet)

This class is exclusively for elementary and junior high guards (excluding 9th grade members). Units competing in the classification will be judged using the WGI Regional A Class criteria and sheets. This class is designed to expose the students to the activity, promote beginning level techniques and develop individual training.

TIMING: Minimum performance time is two and a half minutes with a minimum equipment time of two minutes, and a maximum performance time of three and a half minutes. Interval between performances is at least seven minutes.

Novice Class (Novice)

This class is for first year guards, units with 80% 9th graders, and junior high schools with 9th grade members. This class is for units not ready for the demands of Scholastic A Class. Equipment and movement will focus on the training and achievement of the most SIMPLE BEGINNING SKILLS. Groups may choose to do a standstill show.

The purpose of this class is to help the performers grow in the very elementary principles and efforts in handling equipment and movement. The concept of layered skills will probably not exist. Shows will likely “set, move & spin”, presenting one skill at a time. Achievement of simple beginning skills is the main focus of this class. Units competing in this classification will be judged using the WGI Regional A Class criteria and sheets. **TIMING:** Minimum performance time is three minutes with a minimum equipment time of three minutes, and a maximum performance time of four minutes. Interval between performances is at least seven minutes.

Regional A Class (Scholastic Regional A “RA”)

This class is for units not ready for the demands of A Class. Equipment and movement will focus on the training and achievement of the most SIMPLE BEGINNING SKILLS. The purpose of this class is to help the performers grow in the very elementary principles and efforts in handling equipment and movement. The concept of layered skills will probably not exist. Shows will likely “set, move & spin”, PRESENTING ONE SKILL AT A TIME. Achievement of simple beginning skills is the main focus of this class. Units competing in this classification will be judged using the WGI Regional A Class criteria and sheets.

TIMING: Minimum performance time is three minutes with a minimum equipment time of three minutes, and a maximum performance time of four minutes. Interval between performances is at least seven minutes.

Scholastic AAA Class (SAAA)

This class is for units not ready for the demands of Scholastic AA or A Classes. Equipment and movement will focus on the training and achievement of the basic skills. Tosses use a limited variety of releases and catch points and typically take place from a

stationary position. Dimensionality is limited and phrases are often very short with much built in recovery time. Movement is mostly demonstrated by moving from place to place. There is usage of simple turns and leaps and performers occasionally explore level changes around the body. The triad is never completely used with elements most often being presented singularly and occasionally presented two at a time. Performer role, character, and emotional development is evident but at a basic level with minimal changes. Units competing in this classification will be judged using the WGI A Class criteria and sheets.

Scholastic AA Class (SAA)

This class is for units not ready for the demands of Scholastic A Class.

Equipment and movement will focus on the training and achievement of the basic skills but with more variety than the Scholastic AAA units. Tosses will begin to display more variety of releases and catch points. There is more exploration of basic dimensionality of equipment and some layering of efforts are beginning to occur. Phrase length is still primarily short (16 to 24 counts) with occasional longer phrases (24 to 36 counts) and recovery time is still apparent. The movement range of dynamic qualities is broadening. There is increasing usage of two elements of the triad simultaneously with occasional use of all three. The concept shows a greater use of artistic effort and a variety of methods of creating effect. Characterization is more developed and changes in the emotional character are beginning to be explored. Units in this classification will be judged using the WGI A Class criteria and sheets.

A Class (Scholastic A "SA"/ Independent A "IA")

This class is for units not ready for the demands of Scholastic Open class. These are the units who customarily compete at a national level of Scholastic A Class within WGI. Guards in this area are at a level where members and staff have a complete understanding of the basic principles of performance and design. Units here may also occasionally explore more intermediate concepts and encourage performers and designers to broaden their skills. Units competing in this classification will be judged using the WGI A Class criteria and sheets. Units will be encouraged to maximize the achievement of these criteria.

TIMING FOR ALL "A" CLASSES: Minimum performance time is four minutes with a minimum equipment time of three and a half minutes, and a maximum performance time of five and a half minutes. Interval between performances is at least eight minutes.

Open Class (Scholastic Open "SO"/ Independent Open "IO")

This class is for a highly competitive unit, which is too advanced to find any competition in the Scholastic A Classes, but is not ready for the demands of Scholastic World Class. Guards in this area have a greater experience level. Both staff and performers have the talent to grow beyond the basics, exploring a higher level of design and performance techniques. Units competing in this classification will be judged using the WGI Open Class criteria and sheets. To stay an Open Class competitor, units must stay within 15 points of the WGI Block score for corresponding week.

TIMING: Minimum performance time is four minutes with a minimum equipment time of three and a half minutes, and a maximum performance time six and a half minutes. Interval between performances is at least nine minutes.

World Class (Scholastic World “SW”/ Independent World “IW”)

This class is for the most highly developed programs. The designation World Class indicates the unit is competitive on the national level. This is the most advanced level of competition for guards with the student talent, design, staff, rehearsal time, and budget capabilities. Students here will be challenged to expand their technical and performance base to achieve their fullest potential within programs that utilize advanced concepts of design. Units competing in this classification will be judged using the WGI World Class criteria and sheets. To stay a World Class competitor, units must stay within 15 points of the WGI Block score for the corresponding week.

TIMING: Minimum performance time is four minutes with a minimum equipment time of three and a half minutes, and a maximum performance time seven and a half minutes. Interval between performances is at least ten minutes.

Scholastic Concert Percussion (PSC)

This class is for those scholastic percussion units who wish to concentrate on the percussive element only. Instrumentation must be oriented to the performance of concert percussion. Movement will be permitted in order to allow performers to change equipment or to allow for better presentation of musical performance only. One non-student conductor is allowed in the concert classes only. This is not a marching/visual class. Credit will be given for musical elements only. Units will be judged on the WGI Concert Open Class criteria and sheets.

TIMING: Minimum performance time is four minutes with a maximum performance time of six minutes. Interval between performances is at least nine minutes.

AA Class Marching Percussion (Scholastic Marching “PSAA”)

This class is for those less experienced percussion units who wish to incorporate design and drill elements into their program. Units will be judged on the WGI Marching A Class criteria and sheets.

TIMING: Minimum performance time is four minutes with a maximum performance time of six minutes. Interval between performances is at least nine minutes.

A Class Marching Percussion (Scholastic Marching “PSA”/ Independent Marching “PIA”)

This class is for those more experienced percussion units who wish to incorporate design and drill elements into their program. Units will be judged on the WGI Marching A Class criteria and sheets.

TIMING: Minimum performance time is four minutes with a maximum performance time of six minutes. Interval between performances is at least nine minutes.

Open Class Marching Percussion (Independent Marching “PIO”)

This class is for those percussion units who wish to incorporate design that is more advanced and drill elements into their competitive program. Open class in NTCA is open to independent units only. Units will be judged on the WGI Marching Open Class criteria and sheets.

TIMING: See current WGI Percussion Manual for timing requirements.

World Class Marching Percussion (Independent Marching “PIW”)

Refer to the WGI Percussion Manual for World class criteria and timing.

Solos & Ensembles (Scholastic Flag/ Scholastic Weapon/ Scholastic Mixed/Scholastic Ensemble)

This class would be used for any individual who is currently enrolled in a public or private secondary school (NOTE: a person could be a member of an independent winterguard yet compete in a high school class solo if they are currently enrolled in high school). In the event that there are not at least three entries in the weapons category, the weapons and mixed classifications will be combined. Ensembles will be defined as groups of two (2) to four (4) performers.

TIMING: Minimum performance time is one and a half minutes with a maximum performance time of three minutes. Interval between performances is at least four minutes.

RECLASSIFICATION PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA

The following conditions must exist simultaneously in order for a unit to be recommended for reclassification by the Executive Board:

- For upward promotions, a unit must receive a score at or above the review score, from 4 of 5 judges on “same sheet” promotions (ex.: from SAAA to SAA), or 5 of 5 judges on “change of sheet” promotions (ex.: RA to SAAA).
- For downward promotions, a unit may be moved down by a majority vote of the Executive Board, based on the classification descriptions.

Units meeting the criteria for reclassification to a lower class shall be encouraged to do so. However, units meeting the criteria for reclassification to a higher class are required to do so at the next contest. No units may drop to a lower classification after March 1st of each contest season. There will be no reviews for promotion made after the second to last contest prior to championships. This is to allow all units to compete and post at least one score prior to championships in the class they will participate in at championships.

All scores will be considered before any penalties are assessed.

WGI Dallas Regional scores will be considered for promotion. Any other WGI regional may be considered for promotion by unit request.

Units who wish to place themselves in a lower class after the season has started may do so by petitioning the Executive Board.

SCHOLASTIC MEMBER PARTICIPATION IN INDEPENDENT UNITS

If a student is a member of their school's scholastic unit (and the unit is a member of NTCA) on or after the first of August, which precedes the competitive season, and chooses to leave that unit and join an Independent or Senior unit, a letter must be on file with the Contest Director. This letter must state that the student is officially released of any obligations to the Scholastic unit. This letter must be signed by the student, a parent or guardian, the director of the Independent or Senior unit, and the official credentialed teacher in charge of the Scholastic unit or a school administrator.

If a student from a school with a Scholastic unit that is a member of NTCA is not a member of that unit on or after the first of August, which proceeds the competitive season, and chooses to join an Independent or Senior unit, no letter is necessary.

INDEPENDENT MEMBER PARTICIPATION IN ANOTHER INDEPENDENT UNIT

If a participant chooses to leave one independent group to audition for or compete with another independent unit, they must have a signed release form from the old group to the new group. This release form should include any outstanding financial balances, and must be kept on file by the new group's unit director for the duration of the season.

PARTICIPATION IN CONTESTS

All participants in any NTCA contest must be affiliated with a member unit (this included anyone participating in the solo and ensemble categories). Dues and fees for the current year must be paid in full before competition is allowed.

Exhibitions will be for judges' taped criticism only. No scores will be given. Exhibitions do not qualify units for Championships.

Director videos are not provided. Each unit will receive a video pass at each contest so that a representative from the unit may video tape the unit's performance. Representatives are allowed to only video tape the unit that they represent. A box for videotaping will be set up at each contest. The representative may enter the box one unit prior and must exit one unit following their unit or the unit they represent will be disqualified.

ASSOCIATION CONTESTS

The suggested order for any NTCA contest is:

- Flag solos
- Weapon solos
- Mixed solos
- Ensembles
- Scholastic Marching Percussion
- Scholastic Concert Percussion
- Independent A Class Marching Percussion
- Independent Open Class Marching Percussion
- Cadet Class
- Novice Class

- Scholastic Regional A Class
- Scholastic AAA Class
- Scholastic AA Class
- Scholastic A Class
- Independent A Class
- Scholastic Open Class
- Independent Open Class
- Scholastic World Class
- Independent World Class

The Contest Director will perform a drawing to determine the placement of units in the schedule for any given contest with the exception of NTCA Championships. All entries received by the deadline are eligible for the drawing. Any director wishing to be present when the drawing takes place has the right to be there. Any unit director that wishes to witness the drawing needs to make a formal request to the contest director prior to the entry deadline.

Classifications with 14 or more units competing in a single competition will be split into two divisions. However, divisions will not occur for any national classification (A, Open, World).

An official director or chaperone must be present for each entry, including solo and ensemble, at the contest. This person has the responsibility of making sure the contest stays on schedule, their units, or solos and ensembles, follows the directions of the host, and is accountable for any actions of the unit members. A parent/guardian/sponsor/band director/instructor will need to sign-in for each solo and ensemble at each show. A school sponsor/instructor/band director will need to sign-in each guard or percussion at each show.

Before entering the performance area, the contest host will inspect all props, carts and equipment. Nothing is allowed in the gym without the inspector's approval. Any hard edge must be padded with foam and taped securely. All rifles and sabres should be padded. All flagpoles should have a protective rubber cap on each end. If a unit director is not sure about any equipment, the contest host should be contacted in advance.

Participants should have their name and the proper side clearly marked on each tape or CD. All CD's should be marked with the correct track number if there are multiple tracks. All music, whether tape or CD, should be in a case marked with the unit/performer name. All tapes should be cued and ready to go.

All unit directors of an NTCA unit will receive, prior to the start of the season, a copy of the current WGI Manual, by which NTCA abides. These WGI rules work in conjunction with the NTCA Policies and Procedures Manual and NTCA By-laws. Take note that our interval requirements may differ slightly and that we have assigned timing requirements to the novice, cadet, and Regional A classes since they are not included in the WGI manual. Refer to the classification section above for timing clarifications.

Timing and Penalty penalties are waived until the "compete by" contest.

In accordance with the WGI rulebook, all participating units must have no fewer than five members, and no more than thirty members.

Critique may or may not be available at any given contest, at the discretion of the Contest Director or Contest Coordinator. NO CRITIQUES will be held at Friday night shows. If there is a critique, unit directors must sign up for critique at the tabulation table prior to the end of the contest. A unit director must have listened to their tapes to be admitted into the critique room.

CHAMPIONSHIP CONTEST

In order to compete in the NTCA Championships, participation in 3 earlier NTCA competitions (the North Texas Regional may be used for eligibility for Championships) during the same season is required. Cadet class must participate in 2 competitions to be eligible for Championships. Units that are 100 miles outside of the DFW airport must attend 2 contests to qualify for Championships. All units wishing to compete at Championships must have posted a valid score by the specified "Compete By".

Solo and ensembles must participate in two previous competitions within the same season to be eligible for NTCA Championships.

Percussion units must post 2 scores in each season to be eligible for Championships.

For seeding purposes, NTCA will use the WGI 2 point growth system beginning the first contest through the contest before championships. Solo and ensemble will compete in reverse of highest score order.

Classes with more than 15 units competing will be split into divisions (with the exception of SA, IA, Open, and/or World). Once the units are seeded, the divisions are structured as follows:

DIVISION WHITE DIVISION PURPLE

1 2

4 3

5 6

8 7

9 10

12 11

13 14

15

Affiliated local judges may not be affiliated with championships unless the need arises.

FEES AND DEADLINES

The Contest Director will determine the entry deadline for the competitions: however, it is usually three weeks prior to the event. Contest fees are included in the membership fee for the winterguard and percussion units with the exception of Field Day. Participating units for the Field Day contest will pay the host school \$10 upon check-in.

Contest fees are \$10 per person for solos and ensembles. All participants' names for ensembles must be provided on the solo and ensemble form.

Faxed contest entry forms WILL NOT be accepted.

If a unit and/or solo and ensemble pulls out of a contest, 14 days or less prior to the contest the unit and/or solo and ensemble is still responsible for all fees. If a unit must withdraw from a contest during the season, they must contact the Contest Director at least 14 days prior to the contest date. FAILURE TO NOTIFY THE NTCA CONTEST DIRECTOR IN WRITING AT LEAST 14 DAYS PRIOR TO A SHOW WILL RESULT IN A \$50 PENALTY AGAINST THE UNIT. THE FINE WILL BE INCREASED TO \$100 IF WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SHOW IS MADE LESS THAN 24 HOURS BEFORE THE CONTEST DATE. FAILURE FOR SOLO AND ENSEMBLES TO NOTIFY THE NTCA CONTEST DIRECTOR IN WRITING OF WITHDRAWAL AT LEAST 14 DAYS PRIOR TO A CONTEST WILL INCUR A \$10 FEE AND A \$25 FEE FOR WITHDRAWING LESS THAN 24 HOURS PRIOR TO CONTEST.

All fines must be paid to NTCA before the unit or solo and ensemble may perform at an NTCA contest. Any bank charges incurred by NTCA as a result of a returned check will be passed on to the unit or individual responsible for writing the check.

No pullout fees will be assessed to units who must withdraw from a contest past the deadline due to an act of God or nature, including but not limited to floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, snowstorms, or a mandate from a district superintendent as to bus travel due to any form of inclement weather.

Late fees will be assessed based on the date a unit turns in its paperwork to participate in each contest not on the date of acceptance to a competition.

All contest fees are made payable to NTCA. NTCA will pay \$5.00 per solo and/or ensemble member to the contest host. If requested, fifty percent of this payment will be sent to the contest host two weeks prior to their contest, and the balance will be paid at the end of the show, after the retreat/awards ceremony. Any pullout fees or late fees are the property of NTCA, not the contest host. All late fees are applied to the NTCA Scholarship Fund.

HOSTING A NTCA CONTEST

Applications must be received from all contest hosts who wish to host a NTCA contest. Application deadline is September 1st, preceding the season. All application materials, including associated fees, as outlined on the current contest host application form, must be present in order for an application to be considered.

All contest applications will be reviewed by the contest committee. Priority is given to returning units, but first year units may apply. Potential sites and dates will be presented to the executive board, who will vote on the schedule to present to the full membership at the fall meeting. The full membership votes on the contest sites at the fall meeting. The championship site is voted for every other year, with the site granted for two consecutive years. The second year for a championship site will be granted following the review and recommendation of both the contest director and the executive board.

Any school that agrees to host a NTCA contest accepts all liability. It is suggested that sufficient adults be posted throughout the school to discourage any vandalism to the facility. It may be wise to have at least one official security officer or off-duty officer and a first aid attendant at the contest. We hope that each school that sponsors a contest makes a nice profit; however, they are assuming some risk. NTCA will not accept responsibility for any damage.

By accepting the duty of hosting a NTCA contest, all hosts agree to run the contest under to guidelines of the NTCA “How To Host A Contest” Booklet.

CODE OF CONDUCT/ETHICS

NTCA agrees that it is important to enforce the Instructors’ Code of Conduct, found in the WGI manual. If any NTCA affiliate, including but not limited to instructor, director, executive board member, student, adjudicator, performer, parent, chaperone, contest host, or prop crew, feels any other NTCA affiliate has behaved inappropriately, they should submit a review form to the executive board. The review form can be found in the appendix section of this document. The review form can also be used as a form of praise or recognition for another NTCA affiliate.

APPENDIX

Several forms are attached to this document for your information. They include copies of the Review Form, Scholarship Application, Contest Host Application, Membership Application, Spiel Sheet, and Solo/Ensemble Judge’s Sheet. Other important forms can be found in the WGI manual, including but not limited to the caption judges’ sheets, T&P sheets, and critique sheets.

CHANGES TO THIS DOCUMENT

This document is an extension of the NTCA by-laws and is considered policy. Additions, omissions, and amendments may be made at any NTCA general membership meeting and require a two-thirds vote.

Adopted by unanimous vote of the NTCA membership at the annual fall general membership meeting on Sunday, September 21, 2003.

Last updated 11/05