



HWAA CIRCUIT MANUAL

2024 WINTER SEASON

HEARTLAND WINTER ARTS ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 703, Boys Town, NE 68010



I. Adoption of Winter Guard International (WGI) Rules

Heartland Winter Arts Association is a recognized circuit of Winter Guard International (WGI), and the circuit therefore adopts all rules and regulations set forth in the current Color Guard, Percussion, and Winds WGI Adjudication Manual and Rule Books and WGI Contest Rules. HWAA reserves the right to make modifications to these rules and regulations for use in the circuit only. If a unit participates in a competition outside of the circuit, such modifications do not apply, and the unit must follow rules and regulations of said competition.

II. Membership

A. Eligibility

1. Any color guard, winter guard, indoor percussion ensemble, or winds group is eligible for membership in the circuit.
2. A unit must apply in writing on a form or application provided by the circuit in order for the unit to be eligible to compete in the season contests.

B. Membership Levels

1. HWAA Full Membership

- a) Unlimited attendance of HWAA contests.
- b) Voting privileges at general Circuit meetings.
- c) All circuit mailings – electronic or postal mail.
- d) Free entry to the HWAA Championships contest.
- e) Contest registration in CompetitionSuite.
- f) Additional units from the same school/organization will be given a discount on a Full Membership.
- g) Participation in educational events.

2. HWAA General Membership

- a) Contest attendance with an additional fee per contest entered.
- b) All circuit mailings – electronic or postal mail.
- c) Contest registration in CompetitionSuite.

3. HWAA Guest/Partner Membership

- a) Entrance in one regular season contest.
- b) All circuit mailings.
- c) Contest registration in Competition Suite.
- d) Units choosing to upgrade to General Membership will have fees paid applied to the new membership level.



III. Finances

The Circuit shall use its finances to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes said forth in the Circuit Fees and Funds Statement.

A. Annual Dues

1. Membership fees will be assessed to each member unit on an annual basis.
2. Three levels of Membership are offered as follows:
 - a) Full membership
 - b) General Membership
 - c) Guest/Partner Membership
3. This fee shall be determined by the Board prior to each season.
4. Any unit that has not paid the membership dues and late fees by the first performance will be allowed to participate in contests but will not receive commentary or scores until all dues and fees are paid current.
5. The HWAA Board will work with any unit in a financial hardship on a case-by-case basis, if contacted prior to the above deadline.
6. Units that register for Membership but must cancel their registration will receive refunds based on the following:
 - a) A full refund will be given if a unit cancels Membership by December 1 prior to the season.
 - b) A 75% refund will be given if a unit cancels Membership by January 1 prior to the season.
 - c) No refund will be given if a unit cancels Membership after January 1 prior to the start of the season.

B. Host Site Fees

1. HWAA shall collect a fee from sites hosting a season contest. Such details are included later in these Rules in Section VI. E.
2. The primary purpose of host fees is to cover expenses HWAA may incur related to the contest and/or running of the Circuit.

C. Contest Expenses

1. Awards will be provided by the Circuit to be presented at the conclusion of the Championships contest only.
2. The Circuit will purchase equipment as needed to perform the duties of the contest, such as digital recorders, computer equipment, etc. Host sites may be asked to provide additional equipment, as needed.
3. Judges shall be paid for services rendered during Circuit contests, based on the level of judicial experience.



- a) Local I – 1st or 2nd year as judge.
 - b) Local II – 3rd+ years as judge.
 - c) Regional – Judges from outside of the Local circuit.
 - d) WGI Certified – Judges listed on the WGI website.
 - e) Mileage will be reimbursed at the current IRS rate for anyone traveling round trip over 50 miles.
 - f) Negotiation of the above rates may be made at the discretion of the HWAA Executive Board.
 - g) At each show, it is the goal of the Circuit to provide two regional judges, or a WGI certified judge for both guard and percussion classes.
4. Contest staff shall be reimbursed for services rendered including, but not limited to, contest site coordinator, tabulator, technology assistant, and other pertinent individuals.

IV. Eligibility

Any unit violating the requirements of the Eligibility section shall be disqualified from the contest and must forfeit any scores, placements, and awards.

A. Age Limits

HWAA shall adopt and follow all rules regarding age limits as set forth in the current Color Guard, Percussion, and Winds WGI Adjudication Manual and Rule Books and WGI Contest Rules.

B. Unit Performers

1. Scholastic Units

- a) A performer may participate in one guard unit, one percussion unit, and one winds group from the same school.
- b) Scholastic units may combine students from multiple schools following the current WGI Combined Schools policy. Scholastic units not participating in WGI may submit requests to the HWAA Executive Board for review.

2. Independent Units

- a) A performer may participate in one guard unit, one percussion unit, and one winds group from the organization.
- b) Independent units may not use a student from a school with a scholastic unit participating in HWAA, unless written permission is given by the school principal of the scholastic unit on a form created by the Circuit.



C. Number of Performers

1. Guard Units

- a) Guard units in the A and Open classes may not compete with less than five (5) nor more than forty (40) performers in the competition area at any time.
- b) The numbers of performers requirement shall be waived for the Scholastic Novice class.

2. Percussion Units

- a) Percussion units may not compete with less than six (6) members in the competition area at any time including the optional student conductor.
- b) Marching percussion ensembles may use one optional student conductor positioned in the competition area.

3. Winds Groups

- a) Winds groups must have a minimum of ten (10) members on the floor of competition at any time including the student conductor (optional).

v. Unit Classifications

A. Guard

The following guard classes will be recognized by HWAA. Additional classes may be added by the HWAA Executive Board.

1. Scholastic Novice
2. Scholastic and Independent Regional A
3. Scholastic and Independent A
4. Scholastic and Independent Open
5. Scholastic and Independent World

B. Percussion

The following percussion classes will be recognized by HWAA. Additional classes may be added by the HWAA Executive Board.

1. Scholastic Concert Regional A
2. Scholastic Concert Open
3. Scholastic Concert World
4. Scholastic Novice
5. Scholastic Marching Regional A
6. Scholastic and Independent Marching A
7. Scholastic and Independent Marching Open
8. Scholastic and Independent Marching World



C. Winds

The following winds classes will be recognized by HWAA. Additional classes may be added by the HWAA Executive Board.

1. Scholastic Novice
2. Scholastic Regional A
3. Scholastic and Independent A
4. Scholastic and Independent Open
5. Scholastic and Independent World

D. Participation in Winter Guard International (WGI) Contests

1. If a unit participates in a WGI contest, it must at least participate with HWAA in that class based on the same judging criteria or score sheets. A unit may not compete in a lower class in HWAA than what it is registered for in WGI. (For example, if a unit participates in WGI in Scholastic A, it could potentially participate in Scholastic A, , or a higher class at HWAA events.)
2. If a unit is reclassified at a WGI contest, the appropriate adjustment in classification will be made for HWAA contests.
3. Units may submit a petition to the Executive Board on any reclassification prior to the unit competing in the new classification by the Tuesday following reclassification.

E. Reclassifications

1. The following placements from the HWAA Championships contest will automatically be reclassified to the next highest class for the following competitive season: Champions and Runner-Up of the Scholastic Regional A class. If a school has a feeder program with multiple classes represented, they are exempt from the end-of-season reclassification.
2. HWAA reserves a right to suggest reclassification of any unit into a new class. A review will be done by the Executive Board and consultation from the judicial panel.
3. Units may submit an appeal to the Executive Board on any reclassification.

VI. Contest Calendar and Host Sites

A. Contest Dates

1. A list of contest dates will be made public by the Circuit after regional competition dates and sites are announced by Winter Guard International (WGI).
2. Such dates are not considered to be final until the full calendar of contest dates and sites are created and voted on by the Membership.



3. Optional clinics will be offered at the first three weekends of the competitive season. Clinics will cost \$75.00 fee per unit. Interested units will sign up by weekend preference by the set deadline per clinic. If more units are interested than slots available, a lottery system will take place.

B. Hosting Eligibility for Contests

1. HWAA regular season contests are hosted by member units. Contests may be held at schools or other locations approved by the Executive Board.
2. Units must be in good standing with the circuit in order to be considered as a contest host site.
3. Host units/organizations must have at least one (1) competing unit during the season in which they host a contest.
4. All possible sites must be able to meet the requirements of the Contest Host Packet.

C. Host Site Applications

1. A unit must apply to host a contest on a form or application provided by the Circuit. Such applications will be available after the proposed contest dates are determined.
2. Applications must be received by the deadline set by the circuit in order to be considered for the contest selection process.
3. Each host site application must include a completed host site inspection form. Each form will be good only for the current season selection process.

D. Selection Process

1. All host site applications received by the deadline set by the Circuit shall be considered. Applications received after the deadline will be held for consideration should an approved site be unable to host.
2. The Executive Board will send out proposed schedules of host sites for regular season contests and the Championships contest, which will be voted on by the Membership.
3. If more than one site applies for the same date, the Executive Board shall take into account the strength and weaknesses of each site in determining which shall host on that date.

- a) Factors that may be considered, but not limited to, are: location, warm-up areas, seating, homerooms, volunteers, unit tenure, and hosting experience.
- b) The site that can provide a better overall experience to participating units shall be awarded the date in question.

4. Any open dates will first be offered to units that applied but were not chosen as a host site, prior to opening up selection to the entire circuit.



E. Host Fees

1. HWAA will collect 50% of the gate admission fees from a regular season contest.
2. HWAA hosts the Championship contest. The unit/organization providing the location at a school will receive 35% of the gate admission and all concession revenue.
3. If the host fee or Welcome Packet are not received within the timeframes set forth in the Circuit Manual, the gate admission fee percentage shall be raised by an additional 5%.

F. Contest Welcome Packet

1. The host school/organization shall submit to HWAA a Welcome Packet no later than three (3) weeks prior to the contest.
2. HWAA will send the Welcome Packet out no later than two (2) weeks prior to the contest.
3. The packet shall include the following:
 - a) A map and directions to the site.
 - b) A map of the facility, including unloading and loading areas.
 - c) Entrance and exit in the performance space.
 - d) The timeline used for the contest (as dictated by HWAA).
 - e) Other pertinent details regarding the contest (i.e. dressing rooms, parking, concessions, etc.).

VII. Contest Procedures

A. Schedules

1. Contest schedules will be determined no later than two (2) weeks prior to the contest date. No schedule changes will be made later than 10 days prior to the contest.
2. Schedules will be distributed by electronic mail and posted on the circuit website.
3. Performance order in regular season contests is determined a random draw, except for the host school/unit, which will always perform last in their respective class. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis.
4. Contests will be divided into three blocks. Block One will be the Novice and Regional A guard classes. Block Two will be all classes in the Winds and Percussion divisions. Block Three will be the A, Open, and World guard classes.
5. Performance order in the Championships contest is determined by seeding in all classes. All units will be seeded using their most recent regular season contest score increased by 1.5 points each week of the regular season calendar. Units with identical scores will determine order by random draw.



6. Units will not be required to perform before the time set in the most current schedule for the contest.

B. Cancellations

1. Whenever possible, HWAA will defer to the weather policy of the host school regarding extracurricular activities.
2. HWAA reserves the right to cancel a contest depending on imminent weather conditions. Any decision will be made as soon as such pertinent details are available.
3. Notice of a contest cancellation will be made via email, the HWAA website, HWAA Facebook page, CompetitionSuite, and any other appropriate means of communication.
4. Contests canceled by HWAA will count towards the required number of contests to perform at the Championships contest, provided the unit was scheduled to attend the contest prior to its cancellation.
5. Any unit withdrawing from a contest later than ten (10) days prior to the contest date will be subject to a \$200.00 cancellation fee, payable to HWAA. If the cancellation fee is not received prior to the HWAA Championships contest, the unit shall not be allowed to participate in that contest. Extenuating circumstances will be considered for exemption by the HWAA Executive Board.

C. Contest Site Volunteers

1. The HWAA Contest Director will contact each host site to determine the specific positions needed to host a successful contest. Any additional volunteer positions may be filled by the site.
2. Each unit competing at the HWAA Championships contest will be required to provide a volunteer for the contest. The HWAA Executive Board and Contest Director will work with the host site to determine the needed positions.

D. Exhibitions and Exhibitors

1. One non-dues paying unit may perform per show in exhibition at any HWAA contest without commentary, excluding Championships. Each unit will only be allowed to perform once per season.
2. Exhibition units must request to perform in writing to the Executive Board at least two weeks prior to the regular season contest in which they wish to perform.
3. Exhibition units must be listed on the regular season contest schedule in which they perform.
4. Booth space will be available for an exhibitor, contingent on space available at the host site, and subject to approval by the Executive Board. Such exhibitor will be restricted to providing information related to the activity. A fee of \$25.00 will be required, payable to HWAA.



E. Admission

1. Units will receive free admission for all performers plus 7 staff/parent admissions. All others must pay admission.
2. Admission for contests will be \$15.00 for adults, \$10.00 for students with a valid ID and adults 65+. Children under age 5 are free. (This will be trialed for the 2023 and 2024 seasons and revisited at the 2024 Postseason meeting.)
3. HWAA will verify the funds in the admission gate cashbox prior to and at the conclusion of the contest. A Host Site representative must be available to approve the cashbox with the Treasurer one and a half (1.5) hours prior to the start of the contest. The gates of a contest will not open prior to one (1) hour before the first scheduled performance time. The gates to a contest must officially be opened with the signatures of the Treasurer or President and a delegate determined by the Host Site after the host fee has been collected and the cashbox has been counted.

F. Photography and Video Recording

1. Photography of any kind is not allowed at all HWAA events, excluding photographers contracted by the Circuit.
2. There shall be no public recording of any kind at all HWAA events.

G. Sound Checks

1. Sound checks will be available starting 30 minutes prior to the contest and during breaks only.
2. Units should have multiple labeled copies and formats of music readily available at the contest.
3. All color guards should do a sound check to ensure the playability of music. Color guards should check the soundtrack at multiple places in the music to verify playability of any device. Color guards should still do a sound check if they uploaded music in CompetitionSuite.
4. Each color guard must have a designated person at the sound table to instruct the sound operator when to start the music after directed by the contest Timing and Penalty judge or after the color guard's introduction. If the color guard has an issue with the music, the color guard's representative must make the decision to tell the operator to stop the music. If the color guard representative chooses not to stop and the color guard completes their performance, the color guard will not be offered an opportunity to perform again. Interval timing will continue as the color guard resets and begins again. The Timing and Penalty judge has the sole discretion in waiving any timing penalty due to the restart.
5. The sound decibel limit will be measured from the General Effect Judges' position. Decibels over 85 must be turned down. Final volume discretion is given to the sound operator based on their equipment and the Timing and Penalty judge who ultimately determines an appropriate volume level.



H. Traffic and Staging Areas

For the safety of all event participants, there will be no synchronized warm-up of any kind inside the venue. Synchronized warm up may only occur in designated warm up areas. Students and staff will not spin, toss, play, dance, or maneuver any equipment at any time other than in designated warm up areas during the specified warm up time.

I. Scoring and Reclassifications

1. All judging and scoring will be done using the rules as set by Winter Guard International (WGI) in its Adjudication Manual and Rule Books, with the exception of the Novice classes.
2. At the conclusion of each contest, CompetitionSuite shall be used to distribute judicial comments, scores, and recaps to all units.
3. Unit will be recommended for reclassification via a score-based trigger of a contest to the Review Committee, who shall discuss and make the final decision. The score-based trigger will increase each contest. Such reclassifications may be appealed by the unit in writing to the Executive Board per Section VIII.B.
4. Reclassifications during the season will end at the second show prior to Championships, allowing a unit to perform at least one show in its new class prior to the Championships contest.
5. Reclassified units will not be assessed undertime penalties at regular season contests if the new class has a higher minimum time. Undertime penalties will be applied at the Championships contest.

J. Critique

1. Units will be given an opportunity to participate in a critique during or at the conclusion of the contest.
2. Units shall give notice of their intent to participate in critique during unit check-in for the contest.
3. Instructors can attend critique on a first-come, first-served basis.
4. Instructors are highly encouraged to listen to judicial comments prior to entering to get the best out of the critique.
5. Critique comment assistance forms will be available for units to fill out after attending the critique, and turned in by the next contest date.

K. Championships Contest Eligibility

To participate in the HWAA Championships contest, a unit must participate in a minimum of 2 regular season contests.

L. Recognition and Awards

1. Scores and placements will be announced at the conclusion of each regular season contest
2. No awards will be given unless provided by the host school/organization.



3. All units in competition above Novice class at the Championships contest will receive an award for their class placement. Novice class will receive a rating award.
4. Units not in competition at the Championships contest will receive an award for their season participation.

M. Judges Review

Unit Directors will be given the opportunity to provide critical feedback about competition judges to the Judges Liaison. A written form will be provided by the Circuit, and if necessary, appropriate action will be taken by the Judges Liaison to follow up with positive and/or negative reviews. All formal complaints must be submitted in writing and kept on file for a minimum of three years. A threshold of 33% negative reviews on one judge per visit will trigger the Executive Board to review for potential action.

VIII. Appeals

A. Contest Appeals

1. Appeals to any rule or scoring may be submitted in writing to the Executive Board no later than 24 hours following the conclusion of the contest.
2. Final interpretation of any and all rules will be decided by the Executive Board, and a decision rendered within 7 days.

B. Reclassification Appeals

1. HWAA reserves a right to suggest re-classification of any unit into a new class. A review will be done by the Executive Board and consultation from the judicial panel.
2. Units wishing to appeal a reclassification suggestion may do so in writing to the Executive Board.
3. Units may submit a petition to the Executive Board on any reclassification prior to the unit competing in the new classification by the Tuesday following reclassification.
4. The Executive Board will discuss the appeal and has the final decision regarding the re-classification.

IX. Amendments

- A. Proposed amendments to the Circuit Manual must be requested in writing and can be created by, or sent to, the Executive Board prior to a Circuit meeting. Amendments are then sent out to the Membership and are subject to a voting process at a Circuit Meeting. A majority vote shall be required to approve an amendment for it to become effective. Any approved amendments can be retroactive for the completed season.



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- B.** All Rule changes must be submitted in writing and voted upon prior to December 31st to become effective for the upcoming competitive season. Any changes submitted and passed after that date will not become effective until the next competitive season.



Appendix A: Timing

Guard

Class	Interval Time	Min. Perf. Time	Max Perf. Time	Min. Equip. Time
World	10:00	4:00	7:30	3:30
Open	9:00	4:00	6:30	3:30
A & B	8:00	4:00	5:30	3:30
Regional A	7:00	3:00	4:30	3:00
Novice	7:00	2:30	4:00	2:00

Marching and Concert Percussion

Class	Interval Time	Min. Perf. Time	Max Perf. Time
World	11:00	4:00	8:00
Open	10:00	4:00	7:00
A	9:00	4:00	6:00
Regional A	9:00	3:30	5:30

Winds

Class	Interval Time	Min. Perf. Time	Max Perf. Time
World	11:00	4:00	8:00
Open	10:00	4:00	7:00
A	9:00	4:00	6:00
Regional A	9:00	3:30	5:30
Novice	9:00	3:00	5:00



Appendix B: Scoring

Guard

Individual Analysis Equipment = **Twenty (20) points**, one judge

Vocabulary = Ten (10) points (A Classes = Seven (7) points)

Excellence = Ten (10) points (A Classes = Thirteen (13) points)

Individual Analysis Movement = **Twenty (20) points**, one judge

Vocabulary = Ten (10) points (A Classes = Seven (7) points)

Excellence = Ten (10) points (A Classes = Thirteen (13) points)

Design Analysis = **Twenty (20) points**, one judge

Composition = Ten (10) points

Excellence = Ten (10) points

General Effect = **Twenty (20) points**, two judges

Composition = Ten (10) points

Excellence = Ten (10) points

Timing and Penalties = Penalties assessed per rules

Marching Percussion

Music = **Thirty percent (30%)**, one judge

Composition = Ten percent (10%)

Performance Quality = Twenty percent (20%)

Effect - Music = **Thirty percent (30%)**, one judge

Overall Effect = Fifteen percent (15%)

Music Effect = Fifteen percent (15%)

Visual = **Twenty percent (20%)**, one judge

Composition = Ten percent (10%)

Performance Quality = Ten percent (10%)

Effect - Visual = **Twenty percent (20%)**, one judge

Overall Effect = Ten percent (10%)

Visual Effect = Ten percent (10%)

Timing and Penalties = Penalties assessed per rules

Winds

Music Analysis = **Thirty percent (30%)**, one judge

Composition = Fifteen percent (15%)

Achievement = Fifteen percent (15%)

Visual Analysis = **Thirty percent (30%)**, one judge

Composition = Fifteen percent (15%)

Achievement = Fifteen percent (15%)

Overall Effect = **Forty percent (40%)**, one judge

Repertoire Effectiveness = Twenty percent (20%)

Communication Effectiveness = Twenty percent (20%)

Timing and Penalties = Penalties assessed per rules

Concert Percussion

Music = **Fifty percent (50%)**, one judge

Composition = Twenty percent (20%)

Performance Quality = Thirty percent (30%)

Artistry = **Fifty percent (50%)**, one judge

Program = Twenty percent (20%)

Fulfillment = Thirty percent (30%)

Timing and Penalties = Penalties assessed per rules



Appendix C: Instructors Code of Conduct

The Executive Board of HWAA feels that it is important to enforce the Instructors' Code of Ethics. If judges and staff are expected to adhere to a professional code of conduct, then it is appropriate that this standard is exacted from the instructional community as well. Heartland Winter Arts Association is a recognized circuit of Winter Guard International (WGI), and the circuit therefore adopts the WGI Code of Conduct for Participating Groups and WGI Code of Conduct for WGI Personnel. The most current Codes of Conduct can be found at the links below:

WGI Code of Conduct for Participating Groups:

<https://wgi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/WGI-Code-of-Conduct-Groups.pdf>

WGI Code of Conduct for WGI Personnel:

<https://wgi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/WGI-Code-of-Conduct-Personnel.pdf>



Appendix D: General Description of HWAA Classifications

If a school has a feeder program with multiple classes represented, they are exempt from the end-of-season class reclassification.

Novice Guard and Percussion

This includes guard and percussion divisions. The primary goal should be the development and reinforcement of fundamentals in performance and design.

- Guard members are exploring beginning and limited vocabularies, including:
 - Basic movement skills
 - Basic equipment skills
 - Basic staging
- Guard scoring is based on the Movement and Equipment captions only, using sheets developed by HWAA. Percussion scoring is based on sheets developed by HWAA.
- Novice Percussion may use samples that include rhythmic intent and backing tracks.
- Awards will be based on a ratings system, instead of placements.

Novice Winds

This class is comprised of introductory level of vocabulary skills, quality of design, and excellence. Ensembles are exploring simultaneous responsibilities when appropriate. Music selections are appropriate for members in their first years of playing a musical instrument. The primary goal of this class is to introduce fundamentals of marching, playing, and marching arts. This class is for non-high school groups that have middle school age members or students in their first year of a marching program. This class uses the WGI A Class Criteria and WGI Score Sheets, and placements are announced.

Regional A Guard

This classification is for beginning high school units, typically comprised of younger, less experienced students.

- There is limited vocabulary in the written work.
- Guard member are exploring developmental levels in skills, including:
 - Developmental movement skills
 - Developmental equipment skills
 - Developmental weapon skills
- The prime purpose is to develop individual training that will assure each student's technical growth.

Regional A Winds

This class is comprised of beginning level of vocabulary skills, quality of design, and excellence. Ensembles are using limited simultaneous responsibilities when appropriate. Music selections are appropriate for members in later middle school or early high school concert groups. This class is for any unit in which members consist of beginning high school students or those who are eligible. This class uses the WGI A Class Criteria and WGI Score Sheets, and placements are announced.

Scholastic A Guard

This class reflects a high level of achievement for the HWAA. Directors and/or instructors now strive for clear concepts and logic in programs that will allow the performers to reach a high level of achievement.



- Focus is on achievement and excellence.
- The program is clear and identifiable and a greater depth of repertoire.
- Moments are effective.
- Coordinated effects are consistently sustained (fewer breaks in design)
- Phrases are more dimensional.
- Performers have a developed range of expressive qualities.
- Recovery is evident.
- There is a progressing range of equipment and body skills.
- Phrases done while traveling.
- Layering of body and equipment is achieved.
- There is a growing comprehension of staging.

All other classes will follow the definitions set by WGI.