



Rules & Guidelines

PERSONNEL

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

NNIA 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.

1. All performing participants in scholastic classes must be approved for participation by the sponsoring school(s) or educational institution. Each scholastic ensemble shall submit an NNIA Scholastic Eligibility Certification Form provided by NNIA and signed by the authorizing school principal or administrator listing all approved participants of that school's ensemble to the NNIA Circuit Coordinator.

Types of scholastic ensembles are defined as follows:

- a. **Single School.** A performing unit 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 ensemble shall submit the Scholastic Eligibility Certification Form signed by the authorizing school principal or administrator and file with the Circuit Coordinator by January 31st to be allowed to attend events.
 - b. **Combined Schools.** A performing unit in any scholastic class may apply for approval to combine students from multiple schools within a school district under the following guidelines:
 - i. Groups combining students from multiple schools within a school district may not have another group in the same division (Color Guard, Percussion, or Winds) participating locally with a Circuit Partner, or with WGI. In very rare cases, schools from different districts may combine if approved.
 - ii. If approved, combined school groups may be required to compete using a school district name.
 - iii. Scholastic performing units utilizing students from parochial, vocational, or charter schools, must apply for approval under combined school guidelines.
 - iv. All performing units shall submit the Combined Schools Participating Group Master Agreement signed by the district superintendent and file with the Circuit Coordinator.
 - v. NNIA will have the final determination on whether a group will be permitted to combine students from multiple schools.
 - vi. Letters must be provided by January 1st. Units failing to do so WILL NOT be permitted to participate in any NNIA event.
2. Directors (excluding concert percussion conductors) or adults may not perform with the unit. Adults may assist in setting up and removing equipment but must remain outside of the performance area during the performance.
 3. Each Independent ensemble appearing at a NNIA contest shall be prepared to show proof of age. All performing participants in:
 - a. Color guards in the Independent A Classes composed of performers not over 22 years of age as of 12:01 a.m. on April 1, 2025. Independent Open Class color guards may utilize performers not over 23 years of age as of 12:01 a.m. on April 1, 2025. Independent World Class Color guards may compete with performers of any age.
 - b. Percussion ensembles competing in the Independent class and composed of participants not over 22 years of age as of 12:01 AM on April 1, 2025.
 - c. Winds groups in the Independent Class may compete with performers of any age.

4. Each Independent ensemble appearing at a NNIA contest must be incorporated. Units must upload their Certificate of Good Standing by January 1st. A certificate of good standing for a corporation, also known as a certificate of status or certificate of existence, is a document that verifies that a corporation is legally registered in their home state and is authorized to conduct business. The certificate is issued by a government authority, usually the Secretary of State, and shows that the corporation has met all requirements, including filing reports and paying fees.
5. No ensemble may compete with less than five (5) members on the floor of competition at any time including the student conductor (optional). No more than fifty (50) participants in the competition area at any time.
6. Percussion & Wind 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.
7. Directors are encouraged to contact the contest coordinator to inquire about the use of particular equipment or materials when its permissibility under this section or at specific sites may be in question.
 - a. The coordinator 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.
 - b. All lighting and robotic devices must be controlled by a performer in the competition area. Staff members may also communicate through a text-based messaging tool to a designated performer in the event the lighting/robotics need adjustment.

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

Percussion Music, Spoken Word, and Visual Arts

Permission for use of copyrighted material is the responsibility of each participating ensemble. NNIA requires all participating groups to comply with copyright laws regarding performance and/ or use of arrangements of copyrighted music, visual images and other materials, as well as the use of copyrighted audio, spoken text and display of copyrighted words and images. If copyright violation is found to exist, disqualification may occur.

Each unit must provide copyright clearance (approved Permission to Arrange) for each song included in their program by January 31st to be allowed to attend events.

If the music is an original composition or public domain, please submit that in writing via email and no other paperwork is necessary.

Spoken Word / Literary Copyrights

- Spoken word – Including movie quotes, and literary quotations, may contain copyrighted content. You should exercise care to ensure that you have permission to use any copyrighted words in your show.

Visual Arts

- Visual pieces of art, including photographs, are most likely copyrighted. You should exercise care to ensure that you have permission to use any copyrighted visual image in your show.

PARTICIPANT PROTECTION AND SAFETY

Participating Units shall follow all laws applicable to it, including both the laws of its home state and the laws of the state(s) to which the Participating Unit travels. In particular, all laws concerning the protection and safety of participants in youth-serving organizations must be adhered to strictly.

If NNIA receives information of any kind (oral or written, “informal” or “formal”) suggesting that misconduct has occurred that is connected in any way to individuals or activities associated with the and Participating Unit, and if the suggested misconduct meets any of the following criteria, then NNIA shall report the matter to the appropriate external authorities as may be necessary and notify WGI of the information in writing immediately to the extent local privacy laws allow:

- Any misconduct of a sexual nature or potentially classifiable as a sex offense under applicable law, including without limitation so-called “victimless” activities such as prostitution, pornography, and indecent exposure;
- Any misconduct in which actual or suggested sexual relations is an element;
- Any harassing conduct pertaining to, in whole or in part, an individual’s sex, gender, sexual orientation, or gender expression; and
- Any conduct involving harm to a minor.

COMPETITION AREA

1. For the purpose of interpretation, the “competition area” shall measure a minimum of sixty by ninety (60’ x 90’) feet and does not include entry ramps, hallways, bleachers or seating area. Ensembles are permitted to utilize the entire designated competition area for their performance. All performers must be in the designated competition area when performance time begins. Depending on the performance venue, NNIA will authorize additional competition area space whenever possible and include that information in the diagram (footprint) to be made available to all competing ensembles to identify the competition area. While the competition area will be increased whenever possible, all ensembles must be prepared to perform within the minimum sixty by ninety foot (60’ x 90’) area.
2. All contest sites must have a minimum of seventy by one hundred feet (70’ x 100’) to accommodate a “safety zone” of five (5) feet from any spectator seating. If no spectators are seated on the sides, then the safety zone may be measured from the left and right walls of the competition area. This will ensure the minimum sixty by ninety (60’ x 90’) foot competition area within the minimum seventy by one hundred feet (70’ x 100’) of the contest site.
3. Once performance timing begins, no performer 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. Any non-participants involved in set up must exit the competition area and safety zones prior to the start of performance time. No penalties shall be assessed for broken sticks, mallets, or hardware falling over the front boundary accidentally.
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.
5. The center of the front boundary line shall be marked by a taped line at the front and back of the competition area.
6. All units must use a floor covering (tarp) for their performance.
7. All floor coverings (tarps) must fit in the designated competition area at each particular contest site and cannot enter the safety zone.
8. 110 volt grounded power sources shall be available at the front of the competition area. Ensembles must provide their own extension cords. Power sources must be dedicated for ensemble use only and have no other electrical devices using designated power sources.
9. Flying of tarps (also known as “ballooning”) to clear floor at conclusion of performance is not allowed.
PENALTY: Disqualification
10. During a performance, adult or non-performing student personnel may not coach, cue, etc. any performing members.

PENALTY: One-tenth (0.1) of a point penalty up to disqualification at the discretion of the Contest Coordinator.

Equipment

1. All electronically produced musical material must be triggered in real-time, and no single, triggered, electronic sound may produce rhythmic intent. Human-voice samples presented as singing or spoken word may be performed with single or multiple triggers, regardless of any rhythmic intent.

PENALTY: 10 Points

2. Ensembles may manipulate their soundboard by using a remote-controlled wireless device through a self-supplied wireless network. NNIA 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 performer in the event the soundboard needs adjustment.
3. For Winds Groups: 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. No motorized vehicles will be allowed. Wheelchairs for disadvantaged performers are accepted.

PENALTY: Disqualification

5. 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.
6. Tap and/or dancing shoes will only be allowed on a hard surface provided by the competing color guard. The hard surface will be properly padded (carpeting, foam, etc.) so as not to damage the floor. A “floor” or tarp alone is not proper padding.

PENALTY: Two (2.0) points each infraction.

7. Flags are defined as any material attached to a pike, pole, rod or staff other than an authorized weapon and used as a flag, with a minimum size of eight (8) inches by twelve (12) inches. National colors must be at least three (3) feet by five (5) feet. Flagpoles must be at least twenty-four (24) inches in length. (Curved and straight poles are acceptable; however, complete circles, squares, etc. to which material is attached are not flags. Material attached to chains, ropes or hoses are not considered flags.) The intent of this definition is to utilize a flag as a flag and not as a scenic element or a prop.
8. Rifles are defined as devices constructed so as to conform to the outward appearance of a military rifle past or present. Sights, slings, trigger, trigger housing, bolt and bolt levers are optional. Rifles must be at least twenty-four (24) inches in length.
9. Sabers/swords are defined as those weapons which are designed to be hand held for cutting, thrusting or slashing an enemy, with either a curved (saber) blade or a straight (sword) blade which may be constructed of wood, plastic, metal or any other suitable material. A cutting edge is not required. Simulated sabers/swords must have either a hand guard or a hilt and must be at least twenty-four (24) inches in length.
10. Authorized equipment may be modified by the addition of visual items, however, attaching a flag, rifle or sabre/sword to a prop does not make the prop a flag, rifle or sabre/sword – it is still a prop. Timing and Penalty judges have the right to inspect and challenge guards for authorized equipment either before or after the maximum performance time with permission of the Contest Administrator.
11. 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. Ensembles should consult with the Contest Administrator 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.
(con't on next page)

Other equipment definitions:

12. No pyrotechnics, discharge of arms, pressurized canisters, dangerous materials, flammable liquids or gas will be permitted in or around the competition area. Smoke machines and/or compressed air apparatuses will not be permitted.
13. Battery operated devices using “common use” batteries (AA, AAA, AAAA, C, D, N, 9V and button cells) are allowed. Devices using dry-cell secondary “rechargeable batteries”, including cell phones, cameras, MP3 players and computers are also allowed. Car and/or truck batteries are not permitted.
14. Use of lasers and flashcubes (electrical and chemical) will not be permitted. Live animals shall not be allowed.
15. Use of powder, dirt or any other airborne substance that lingers in the competition area past the interval time of the percussion ensemble shall be strictly prohibited.
16. Use of helium, including helium-filled balloons, shall be strictly prohibited.
17. Drones or any remote-controlled airborne devices is prohibited.

PENALTY: 10 Points to Disqualification.

18. For the protection of the wooden competition floors, all equipment must be properly taped or otherwise be prepared to assure that damage to the floors will not occur. All equipment tips on rifles, flagpoles, and sabres must be padded or taped. The bottom of all props, flats and scenery made of wood, metal or PVC type plastic must be padded or taped so as not to damage the floor. Soft-soled shoes need no added protection. Hard-soled shoes must be taped. Inspection will occur at all contests. Any damage to the floor that may occur (dragging the timpani, wheels on carts locking, etc.), will be the responsibility of the ensembles and is subject to penalty.

PENALTY: .1 to Disqualification at the discretion of the Timing and Penalty judge.

19. The following safety guidelines are applicable to the construction, transport, and use of any prop or structure, at any WGI event or facility and to any participant, staff, volunteer, or parent who may be assisting in the construction or transport of the prop or structure. These guidelines are in effect during the entire time in the competition area, including setup and exit.
 - a. No participant may be placed on any portion of any prop or structure where the participant’s lowest point of contact (i.e., feet, hands, etc.) is more than 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.
 - b. If a participant is placed on any portion of any prop or structure and the lowest point of contact (i.e., feet, hands, etc.) is more than four feet (4’) above the competition floor, the following is required:
 - If the prop or structure is in motion, the participant must actively use the appropriate safety railing or harness the entire time the prop, structure, or podium is in motion.
 - If the prop or structure is stationary with a safety railing in place, the participant does not have to actively use the safety railing.
 - If the prop or structure is stationary with no safety railing, participant must be harnessed.
 - c. If a participant is placed on any portion of any prop or structure 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 or structure, whether stationary or in motion.

- d. A participant executing a lift or stunt while atop ANY prop or structure 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
- e. Participants are prohibited from jumping or leaping off any prop or structure that exceeds four feet (4') in height above competition floor unless protective padding or other adequate safety precautions are in place.
- f. When a participant is on any prop or structure of any height, wheel locks/brakes shall be engaged to prevent movement while stationary.
- g. 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 the competition floor.
- h. NNIA shall at all times have the final authority to prohibit the use or prescribe additional safety requirements of any prop or structure that presents an unreasonable or unacceptable risk of injury or harm to participants or others or potential danger to a competition venue or its property.

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

PENALTY: 10 Points to Disqualification including (but not limited to) prohibition of the use of the over height/unsafe prop(s).

TIMING

All interval times will include setup, entrance, performance, exit and removal of all props, floors, and equipment.

- Once the previous unit concludes their performance, the next unit will be permitted to enter the competition area/ room and may stage personnel, equipment and/or props in any area behind and up to the interval line. Interval timing will begin when the timing and penalty judge gives a signal to cross the interval line and complete setup.
- The end of the maximum performance time is at the obvious conclusion of the show.
- Interval time will stop once personnel, equipment, and/or props have crossed the interval line depending on the contest site. Units must continue to make a deliberate exit so as not to delay the entrance of the next unit in competition.
- Please make sure to review your showday packet for site specific information. This will be in your unit Dropbox.

PENALTY: One-tenth (0.1) of a point for each 3 seconds or fraction thereof.

Any unit creating a delay in the schedule will be subject to penalty. The time schedule may be expanded at the option of the Contest Administrator, but not lessened.

PENALTY: Five-tenths (0.5) of a point for each class interval time of lateness or part thereof up to the conclusion of the class and/or contest.

Color Guard

Regional A Units will be scheduled to compete at seven (7) minute intervals. Minimum performance time is 3 minutes. Maximum performance time is 4 minutes and 30 seconds.

A Units will be scheduled to compete at eight (8) minute intervals. Minimum performance time is 4 minutes. Maximum performance time is 5 minutes and 30 seconds.

Open Units will be scheduled to compete at nine (9) minute intervals. Minimum performance time is 4 minutes. Maximum performance time is 6 minutes and 30 seconds.

World Units will be scheduled to compete at ten (10) minute intervals. Minimum performance time is 4 minutes. Maximum performance time is 7 minutes and 30 seconds.

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.

Each color guard must accumulate a minimum “authorized equipment time” during their performance:

- Scholastic Regional A must accumulate a minimum of three (3) minutes.
- Scholastic A, Open, and World must accumulate a minimum of three (3) minutes and thirty (30) seconds.

Authorized equipment may be flags, rifles, sabres or swords. Any weapon used may be simulated. Injuries and/or instantaneous exchanges are included in authorized equipment time.

- Authorized equipment must be IN HAND to be considered for accumulating authorized equipment time. (In hand means equipment must be in hand ready to be used, or being used. EXAMPLE: Saber hung at side with hand touching is not considered authorized equipment in hand.)
- If any color guard member is visible to the adjudicators with authorized equipment in hand, the time counts as authorized equipment time.
- A color guard member is considered visible as determined by the timing and penalty adjudicator with a view from the front sideline.

PENALTY: One-tenth (0.1) of a point for each 3 seconds or fraction thereof.

Percussion

Regional A Units will be scheduled to compete at eight (8) minute intervals. Minimum performance time is 3 minutes. Maximum performance time is 5 minutes.

A Units will be scheduled to compete at nine (9) minute intervals. Minimum performance time is 3 minutes. Maximum performance time is 6 minutes.

Open Units will be scheduled to compete at ten (10) minute intervals. Minimum performance time is 3 minutes and 30 seconds. Maximum performance time is 7 minutes.

World Units will be scheduled to compete at eleven (11) minute intervals. Minimum performance time is 4 minutes. Maximum performance time is 8 minutes.

Standstill Units will be scheduled to compete at seven (7) minute intervals. Minimum performance time is 3 minutes. Maximum performance time is 5 minutes.

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.

PENALTY: One-tenth (0.1) of a point for each 3 seconds or fraction thereof.

Winds

Regional A Units will be scheduled to compete at eight (8) minute intervals. Minimum performance time is 3 minutes and 30 seconds. Maximum performance time is 5 minutes.

A Units will be scheduled to compete at nine (9) minute intervals. Minimum performance time is 4 minutes. Maximum performance time is 6 minutes.

Open Units will be scheduled to compete at ten (10) minute intervals. Minimum performance time is 4 minutes. Maximum performance time is 7 minutes.

World Units will be scheduled to compete at eleven (11) minute intervals. Minimum performance time is 4 minutes. Maximum performance time is 8 minutes.

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.

PENALTY: One-tenth (0.1) of a point for each 3 seconds or fraction thereof.

Contests

Independent Ensemble Insurance Requirements: \$1,000,000 General Liability coverage and proof of Accident Medical coverage (suggested limit of \$5,000 but can be less) policies are required per organization. Proof of insurance certificates must include the NNIA recognized group name. Insurance must be provided by January 31st. Units failing to do so WILL NOT be permitted to compete.

Scholastic Ensembles are not required to provide proof of insurance.

- Units may not change classes after their first NNIA event unless deemed necessary by adjudicators and approved by circuit coordinator.
- If a minimum number of entries are not met for a contest, the adjudication panel may be reduced or that contest cancelled.
- Each unit will be given 5 Event Passes for use the entire season and performer wristbands at each show. Additional Event Passes may be purchased for staff and volunteers for \$25 each.
- If a unit is found to have less performers than the amount of wristbands taken at unit check-in, they will be penalized **10 points** for the first infraction. Any infraction after this will be **disqualification**. If a regular team member is injured and cannot perform at a specific contest but still wishes to attend to support their team, the unit will not be punished for this but this information must be disclosed at check-in.
- Units who cancel with less than 2 weeks notice will be charged a \$150 late cancellation fee. Any unit not paying all fees or penalties will have their registration suspended until all fees are paid.
- There will be NO REFUNDS of any monies paid for any reason.

NNIA Membership

A nonrefundable circuit fee per unit is required to compete in the circuit. Each unit will have one vote to use when voting on policy/rule changes.

SCORING

The elements to be judged are:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Marching Percussion</u></p> <p><i>Music – 30%</i> Design – 10% Performance – 20%</p> <p><i>Effect – Music – 30%</i> Music Effect – 15% Overall Effect – 15%</p> <p><i>Visual – 20%</i> Design – 10% Performance – 10%</p> <p><i>Effect – Visual – 20%</i> Music Effect – 10% Overall Effect – 10%</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Color Guard</u></p> <p><i>Equipment – 20%</i> Vocabulary – 10% (A classes=7%) Excellence – 10% (A classes=13%)</p> <p><i>Movement – 20%</i> Vocabulary – 10% (A classes=7%) Excellence – 10% (A classes=13%)</p> <p><i>Design Analysis – 20%</i> Composition – 10% Excellence – 10%</p> <p><i>General Effect – 40%</i> Repertoire Effect – 20% Performance Excellence – 20%</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Concert Percussion</u></p> <p><i>Music</i> Composition – 20% Performance Quality – 30%</p> <p><i>Artistry</i> Program – 20% Fulfillment – 30%</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Standstill Percussion</u></p> <p><i>Music Analysis</i> Design – 40% Performance – 60%</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Winds</u></p> <p><i>Music Analysis – 30%</i> Composition – 15% Achievement – 15%</p> <p><i>Overall Effect – 40%</i> Repertoire Effectiveness – 20% Communication Effectiveness – 20%</p> <p><i>Visual – 30%</i> Composition – 15% Achievement – 15%</p> |

CLASSIFICATION

Middle/Junior/High School/Independent Guard:

- Scholastic/Independent Regional A (beginning skills)
- Scholastic/Independent A (basic skills)
- Scholastic/Independent Open (intermediate skills)
- Scholastic/Independent World (advanced skills)

Middle/Junior/High School/Independent Percussion:

- Concert
- Standstill
- Scholastic/Independent Regional A (beginning skills)
- Scholastic/Independent A (basic skills)
- Scholastic/Independent Open (intermediate skills)
- Scholastic/Independent World (advanced skills)

Middle/Junior/High School/Independent Winds:

- Scholastic/Independent Regional A (beginning skills)
- Scholastic/Independent A (basic skills)
- Scholastic/Independent Open (intermediate skills)
- Scholastic/Independent World (advanced skills)

PERFORMANCE ORDER

Performance order will be determined by the postmark date of entry. The earlier the entry postmark, the later that ensemble will appear in the schedule. Ensembles sharing the same postmark date will be randomly drawn within that group with the same postmark date. ***Your postmark date is when payment for your registration is received.***

Units will not be added to any schedules until payment is received.

AWARDS

NNIA will award the following awards:

Placement awards (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) will be presented to each unit in their respective division.

AWARDS CEREMONY

3 representatives per unit are allowed at NNIA contests. All graduating/age out members are additionally allowed at the NNIA Championships unless a full retreat is planned.