

Hey all,

The next one of Shirlee's emails that I want to be sure you see deals with classification. The genesis of the email is for units that have been promoted, but I think the concepts and approaches should be used by everyone in any class, new or otherwise. Every season is a new paradigm for each class, so it's important to look at the class every season and be sure you understand what the expectations are.

As a note to those that are competing in WGI events this season, in the emails and discussions I've had with folks in the judging community, there seems to be an extra sensitivity this season to using a ballad. It appears there is concern that so many units (particularly in the A classes) use ballads. We in the A class world have known this for years, but it is now a concern to others. I'm not sure if it means anything, but know that that discussion is going on and it may be a good year to not use a ballad...

Be careful when you try to assess what judges have been rewarding in your class. As discussed in previous emails, it is easy to overthink and analyze that piece of the puzzle. Always look for general qualities in this assessment, not particular skills. And, if you are moving up a class in the circuit, remember what brought you success in the class you were in before. Those same skills will be rewarded in every class and that foundation is what will bring you the most competitive success.

Above all else, use this opportunity after the fall season and before you start your winter season in earnest to review the criteria and the FAQ section in the back of the WGI manual (a GREAT resource!!). Take a look at WGI's color guard education pages and see what is there for you. Of course, if you ever have any questions about what the judges are rewarding and why, I am always willing to share my opinion! :) And don't forget to use Dennis ([dkerr@jamahome.org](mailto:dkerr@jamahome.org)) as a great resource in his role as Chief Judge for MCCGA.

I hope your fall has wrapped up well or will soon. I'm looking forward to an exciting season of MCCGA action!!! Best of luck and let me know if I can be of any help. Travel safely,

Chris

# Setting Up For Success

## Moving to a higher class -- Understanding your class

Get ready because this step might not be “fun” but I promise you it's essential and will ultimately make your life far easier.

### KNOW THE STANDARDS OF YOUR CLASS

- Prepare by studying the DVDs of your class from Dayton, and also look at the bottom of the next class higher. Be aware of every quality and choice those folks made and how they were rewarded for their efforts. Knowing the “field” gives you the information to assess where you stand in comparison and allows you to assess just how far you can push your students to higher levels.
- Focus largely on the skills (vocabulary) and the level of training the students are demonstrating.
- Look for trends, both at a design level and at a performance level. Note what seems to be getting the scoring “nod” and *consider* this as you make your choices.
- Most of you will be listening to what seems to be the popular musical choice (that's going to be a major topic in and of itself in a few weeks) *and I want to caution you about the tendency to jump on the "Ballad" bandwagon*. If you do choose a ballad, make sure you have a “twist” that will set you apart.

### KNOW THE SCORING SYSTEM

- You've got to do your homework. *Study the manual*. This is the common tool that both you and the judges will work from. This is your “Accountability” link that will give you the basis of being on the same page.
- Do not assume you know what the system is about.
- Do not assume we are like any other scoring system in our related activities. Philosophically we function with a totally different set of priorities, and while score sheets from Activity to Activity may have a similar name, I assure you the application is very different for Winter Guard.

### KNOW YOUR STUDENTS

- Consider the talent level of your students. Know just how far you can challenge them.
- Consider how much time you have for training. Don't shortchange this step.
- Consider the social/economic circumstances of your students because that could impact their personalities and their time.

### KNOW YOUR STAFF

- Don't over or under estimate those who will be assisting you. Set everyone up for success.

### IF YOU ARE IN A HIGHER CLASS

- Challenge the students with a more diverse vocabulary.
- Set them up mentally for higher expectations. *Push their limits* and set goals that they can achieve and be sure they start to think in a different way.
- If you are now an open class guard, remember that now the Movement and Equipment scores equally credit vocabulary and excellence.
- Don't buy into the idea that you should just keep doing what you did the previous year. I assure you, the higher the class the greater the expectations and challenges.

**REMEMBER, THIS IS COMPETITION. IF YOU WANT TO DO WELL IN THE GAME AT ANY LEVEL, YOU MUST KNOW THE RULES AND THE OTHER COMPETITORS. TRAIN TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE FIRST AND TO SURPASS THE SECOND.**

**THE EDUCATIONAL PART OF ANY COMPETITIVE EVENT IS PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES AND SURPASSING PREVIOUS EFFORTS.**