



Color Guard

A S S O C I A T I O N

2025

Color Guard Rulebook

I. MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Membership Levels for guard units are as follows:

A. MCCGA Full Membership=\$650 (\$600 before the second Monday in November)

Includes:

1. Unlimited MCCGA festival attendance
2. Voting privileges at General Meetings
3. One WGI Adjudication manual
4. All circuit mailings—email and postal mail
5. An additional fee of \$75 will be assessed to attend MCCGA Championships

B. Non-member entrance fee is \$275 per show. Payment is due prior to festival.

C. All fees are due no later than the second Monday in December

D. CANCELLATION POLICY:

1. You may cancel from any festival up to four (4) weeks prior to the festival date with no financial penalty.
2. **Cancellations within four (4) weeks of a festival are subject to a \$100 penalty payable to MCCGA, who will then reimburse the festival sponsor**
3. Payment will be required before you may attend your next MCCGA Festival.
4. Festival Hosts will enforce this policy (i.e. keep track of cancelled units and pass along the information to both the MCCGA Treasurer AND the host(s) of the subsequent festival(s) with the backing of the MCCGA Board of Directors.
5. Festivals cancelled due to inclement weather will not incur financial penalties.
6. Should your unit be required to withdraw from a festival on a day with inclement weather in your area or due to the policy of a school administrator, or other extreme circumstances (i.e. acts of God or nature, theft, fire, etc.) financial penalties will not be incurred.
7. Should a unit be required to withdraw from a festival on a day with inclement weather due to the policy or direction of a school administrator, the unit will have seven (7) calendar days from the date of the withdrawal to request admittance to another festival. Requests will be made to festivalchanges@mccga.org. Admittance subject to the number of units already registered for the requested festival as stipulated in the MCCGA Policy Manual Section V.A. Festival Procedures.
8. To request a schedule change units must send an email to: festivalchanges@mccga.org.

II. ENTRY FORMS

A. Entry forms will be available on the website per the yearly calendar

B. In order to guarantee space in Festival lineups, each entry must be returned to MCCGA.

1. with multiple entries on one form or
2. on separate forms by the second Monday in December, the deadline for MCCGA membership and festival entry.

3. The signed entry form must be submitted with payment or Purchase Order. The entry is NOT valid until payment or P.O. is received.
 4. A unit may enter a festival up until 4 weeks prior to the date of the festival.
- C. Performance times for Festivals will be determined by entry status and random draw.
1. Those eligible for early entry (based on attendance at the annual meeting will be drawn last in each class/round.
 2. THIS DATE IS BASED ON MEMBERSHIP/FESTIVAL ENTRY ON-LINE SUBMITTAL DATE.
 3. In order to maintain early entry status, payment must be received within 30 calendar days of receipt of membership entry. If received past 30 calendar days from entry, postmark date will revert to the date payment is received.
 4. If a unit should send in an entry form for the upcoming season, but still has an outstanding balance with MCCGA, postmark will be determined by payment received postmark.
- D. Information on application to host a festival and all festival procedures is contained in the MCCGA Policy Manual

III. ELIGIBILITY

- A. MCCGA units must adhere to the eligibility rules as stated in the WGI Adjudication Manual and Rulebook except as specifically stated in this Section
- B. Each scholastic color guard should comply with eligibility requirements set forth by its respective state activities association, and school district.
- C. No guard member may perform in more than one (1) color guard from the same sponsoring organization. – Please note that WGI rules will apply if your unit is performing at WGI regionals. Performers and directors should be aware of any state or local activities association’s rules, which may not allow this.

PENALTY: Disqualification – Any unit violating any requirement in the ELIGIBILITY section shall be disqualified and its position/standing in the Festival shall be forfeited.

IV. UNIT CLASSIFICATIONS

- A. All scholastic units must adhere to the scholastic eligibility rules of WGI and their appropriate High School Activities Association, if applicable
- B. Definitions: All definitions are general. More goes into the selection of classification than falling into specific guidelines. Considerations should include experience level of performers and/or designers/instructors; anticipated level of performers; past success of the group; etc. Refer to WGI manual for further discussion of classification.
- C. The MCCGA classification strategy has one main goal:
Provide a consistent and fair grouping of units achieving at a similar level while encouraging their future development. This goal can be met by doing the following:
 1. Provide unit management and staff with clear descriptions of the qualities of guards in each class.
 2. Provide incentives for guards to move into the higher levels of classification.
 3. Provide mechanisms for the circuit to ensure consistent and fair groupings.
 4. Provide an appeal process for guards that feel they are unfairly classed.
- D. When units are deciding classifications, they must consider the following MCCGA policy.
- E. The following rules supersede any other rules regarding classifications in the MCCGA rulebook.

1. If a unit enters a WGI Event in Scholastic A or Independent A class, that unit must perform in MCCGA in either Scholastic A, Scholastic AA or Independent A class. The only exception to this rule is if WGI promotes the unit to the next class, whereby that unit must perform in MCCGA events in the same class as the unit's WGI classification, unless the unit withdraws from that event.
2. If a unit enters a WGI Event in Scholastic Regional A or Independent Regional A class, that unit must perform in MCCGA in either Regional A, or Independent Regional A class.

F. Color Guard Classifications

1. **Classification descriptions may be found in Appendix A to this Rulebook**

G. Unit classification is subject to board discretion

1. Reclassification

A unit may request to move to a lower class but such requests must follow the appeal process outlined below.

Units are promoted between seasons or during a season for the following reasons.

- a) A guard placing first in Scholastic Regional A or Scholastic AA at MCCGA Championships is promoted to the next higher classification for the following season.
- b) A guard placing in any of the top three positions of the same Class for three consecutive seasons is promoted to the next highest Class in the fourth season.
- c) A unit requesting that it be allowed to move to a higher class.

2. Appeal

- a) Units that are promoted between seasons may submit an appeal of their reclassification in email to the Chief Judge (Chair of the Review Committee) no later than four weeks prior to the first festival of the season.
- b) The Steering Committee will vote by email within three days of receiving the appeal.
- c) A simple majority is needed for the appeal to succeed. In the case of a tie, the appeal is denied.
- d) A unit requesting to move to a lower class may submit an appeal to do so by email to the Chief Judge (Chair of the Steering Committee) detailing why the unit should be reclassified.
- e) A unit requesting to move to a higher class (self-promotion) does not need to appeal if the request is in accordance with all other guidelines in this classification section.

3. Mid-Season Promotions

The Top 3 units in Scholastic Regional A and Scholastic AA at each contest will be reviewed as well as all WGI Regional finalists. Units to be reviewed and reclassified by 5th weekend of contests. Additionally, all 1st place units, including all WGI Regional finalists will continue to be reviewed until 2 weeks prior to MCCGA Championships. (Notification time: Wednesday prior to 5th weekend of contests, or earlier, depending on results of Review Committee votes.)

(Remainder of the page intentionally left blank)

To be eligible to compete in MCCGA Championships:

1. Each color guard unit must perform at an MCCGA Festival or WGI Regional by the weekend that unit's Region has its' second Festival. This shall not be construed to mean the unit must perform at a Festival in that unit's Region.
2. The unit must be in good standing i.e. all fees paid to MCCGA or other Members
 AND
3. Each unit must also perform in a least two MCCGA festivals throughout the course of the season.
4. Receipt of Championships \$75 entry fee due 4 weeks prior to Circuit Championships
5. The Executive Board will address exceptions on an individual basis.

B. Championship Seeding

The order of appearance at MCCGA Color Guard Circuit Championships will be determined by the most recent score received by a unit at either a MCCGA festival or WGI Regional. This score will be "progressed" by adding 1.5 points per week, throughout the course of the regular season.

The highest score obtained that weekend will be used for the seeding process. If the finals score is lower than the preliminary score, the preliminary score will be the unit's seed score. If the unit does not advance to finals, their preliminary score will be used for the seeding process.

If rounds are utilized, the highest scoring unit will perform in the final performing round with the next seeded unit placed in the previous performing round. Once a unit has been seeded into the first performing round of the class, the process repeats back at the final performing round and works its way back forward in time until all units are placed in a round. The example is based on three rounds of 27 units.

Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
27, 24, 21,	26, 23, 20,	25, 22, 19,
18, 15, 12	17, 14, 11	16, 13, 10
9, 6, 3	8, 5, 2	7, 4, 1

- C. The date of Circuit Championships for all units judged will be determined by the Executive Board by June 1st of each year for the following season.
- D. In MCCGA Festivals and Championships, any class that has more than 12 units performing shall be divided into equal rounds with not more than 12 units in each round. Each round will be a separate "contest" for purposes of rating, ranking, and awards. Rounds at Championships will be seeded in a manner similar to the method used by WGI for seeding the World Championships rounds.
- E. Eligibility to compete in the MCCGA Championships

ADOPTION OF WGI RULES AND REGULATIONS

- A.** The Unit Director of a Full or Limited MCCGA Membership unit will receive, prior to the start of the season, a copy of the current WGI rules and regulations by which MCCGA abides. These WGI rules and regulations work in conjunction with the MCCGA Rule Book, General Festival Information and Policy Statement. Take note that our timing requirements differ slightly.
- B.** Regardless of WGI rules, MCCGA shall recognize “sickles” as authorized equipment and such equipment having the general shape of a curved rifle shall count toward a unit’s authorized equipment time. Operational definition of this rule shall be made by the Chief Judge.
- C.** Penalties will be waived for lack of authorized performance and/or equipment time in alignment of WGI policy.

VI. INSTRUCTORS CODE OF ETHICS (as state in the WGI Manual)

The MCCGA 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.

If undue and unfair pressure is applied to judges through inappropriate behavior, then this places the competitive experience at risk. Examples cited included but were not limited to: instructors shouting at judges in public and/or at critique, inappropriate conduct of any instructor while accompanying the guard onto the festival floor, inordinate and unauthorized telephone calls to judges, or electronic communication that is derogatory to any other MCCGA member unit or a unit’s staff, directors, or members. There is also a growing concern about disruptive behavior in the warm up area, and rude behavior for the performer/staff of one group towards another. Behavior of this type is intolerable and will result in the loss of the privilege that has been violated. For example, instructors could be barred from the arena floor or festival venue or lose the right to use the warm up venue. Addressing this important issue must be a priority for every unit

The managing administrator of the situation will determine the application of the action. The managing administrator in judging issues is the Director of Education. The Festival Director is the administrator in situation pertaining to festival personnel. The Executive Board is the administrator in matters of poor sportsmanship or inter-guard issues.”

Before a unit may attend critique, the unit must have signed up prior to the festival for critique and have listened to the judges’ commentary on the cassette tapes provided during the festival. This is evidenced by filling out the Instructor’s Critique Sheet provided with the judges tapes and turned in to the Chief Judge at the conclusion of the critique session with that unit. The only exception to this policy is for staffs involved in hosting a festival that day.

VII. JUDGES CODE OF ETHICS (as state in the WGI Manual)

AFFILIATION: A MCCGA judge must disclose any affiliation with any color guard based on the following definitions:

PRIMARY AFFILIATION: Designer, Instructor, Management of the competing unit. A judge with a primary affiliation may not adjudicate the class where his/her affiliation exists. There may be rare exemptions to this to be at the discretion of the MCCGA Chief Judge.

Individuals may not be a MCCGA judge if they are still performing in any Winter Guard or Percussion Line.

SECONDARY AFFILIATION: Any judge who receives compensation from the school, and/or sponsoring organization and any related organization that sponsors or supports the competing color guard i.e. an individual who teaches in the school or who might teach or provide other services for the sponsoring organization as well as any judge, who through family, spouse or significant other who has a primary affiliation as described above. These affiliations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. A judge with a secondary affiliation may judge in his/her affiliated class as long as the color guard he/she is affiliated with is not competing at that contest.

CONSULTATIONS: A current MCCGA Judge is not permitted to give any consultation to any unit other than their primary affiliation.

CONDUCT: No judge may display interest or preference toward any competing guard he/she may judge. Wearing a unit's insignia is forbidden. Judges are encouraged to give input regarding the ethical standards of the judging community. This should be handled through the Director of Education and the Executive Board.

VIII. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY Intellectual property is considered property of MCCGA and is to only be used for official MCCGA business. This includes, but is not limited to: MCCGA website and social media pages, Competition Suite account, Board email addresses, membership rosters including unit email addresses etc. Access to these is granted on an as needed basis with approval from the MCCGA President. At no time should any property of MCCGA be used for personal business. At the time a person becomes no longer a member of the MCCGA board, all access and use of intellectual property will be terminated and copies of such property should be destroyed. Anyone using property for personal gain will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of their seat on the board and prosecution if necessary.

IX. YEARLY CALENDAR

This calendar is included to help the unit directors know what to expect during the year and/or season

October

1ST MONDAY OF OCTOBER- 1ST Registration opens for all units

November

Second Monday of November – Deadline for membership fee discount

December

Second Monday of December – Deadline for membership registration and receipt of all fees

February

Varying – Deadline for guards to have first performance for Championships eligibility (See Rule V.B.1.)

Varying – Deadline to enter MCCGA Championships (4 weeks prior to Championships)

Last Friday of February – Scholarship and Volunteer of the Year Forms due

March

Varying – Deadline to enter MCCGA Championships (4 weeks prior to Championships)

Varying – Last weekend scores can be used for Championship seeding (one week prior to Championships)

(Remainder of page intentionally left Blank)



A S S O C I A T I O N

Classification in the MCCGA will consist of the following class, each reflecting a stage in the learning process: applying, knowing, exploring, or discovering.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE 2023 MCCGA CLASSIFICATIONS:

Scholastic:	Independent:	Judging Criteria:	Timing (in minutes):			
			min	EQ	Max	Int
Scholastic Cadet	Independent Cadet	MCCGA Rating System	3.0	2.5	4.5	7.0
Scholastic Novice	N/A	WGI Regional A Class	3.0	3.0	4.5	7.0
Sch. Regional A	Ind. Regional A	WGI Regional A Class	3.0	3.0	4.5	7.0

Scholastic AA	--	WGI A Class	4.0	3.5	5.5	8.0
Scholastic A	Independent A	WGI A Class	4.0	3.5	5.5	8.0
Scholastic Open	Independent Open	WGI Open Class	4.0	3.5	6.5	9.0
Scholastic World	Independent World	WGI World Class	4.0	3.5	7.5	10.0
	Senior Class	MCCGA Rating system	3.0	3.5	5.5	8.0

GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS OF THE 2024 MCCGA CLASSIFICATIONS:

SCHOLASTIC and INDEPENDENT CADET (SC/IC)

General Definition: This classification is for units with students not in a grade higher than 9th, or not older than 15 years of age. These guards are exploring beginning, limited vocabularies that are designed at an introductory level. The primary goal should be the development and reinforcement of fundamentals in performance and design. In this class, the true beginner will be nurtured through individual training that will assure technical growth while being reinforced through logical program development that allows performers to achieve excellence as a team. Units in this class may self-promote.

Minimum Performance Time:	3.0 Minutes
Minimum Authorized Equipment Time:	2.5 Minutes
Maximum Performance Time:	4.5 Minutes
Interval between Performances:	7.0 Minutes (at least)

Judging Criteria: Units will be evaluated by three judges in the areas of Movement, Equipment and Program Design. Units will receive a score that will relate to one of the three ratings. Each unit's rating will be announced at shows, no scores will be announced at Championships.

SCHOLASTIC NOVICE CLASS

General Definition: The Novice class is composed of first year Fully MCCGA membership groups planning to compete in the Scholastic Regional A class AND units who finished in the bottom 30% of the Regional A class at the previous year's championships.

Minimum Performance Time:	3.0 Minutes
Minimum Authorized Equipment Time:	3.0 Minutes
Maximum Performance Time:	4.5 Minutes
Interval between Performances:	7.0 Minutes (at least)

Units shall remain in this classification for a limit of 2 years. There will be no promotion reviews for this class. Units will be judged on the WGI Scholastic Regional A sheet.

Units attending a WGI Regional **may not** enter this class

No unit will be forced into this class and can remain in the Scholastic Regional A class should they choose, however once the season begins, a team cannot request to move down nor self-promote.

For the 2024 season, those Scholastic Regional A groups scoring under a 71.0 at the 2023 MCCGA Championships, may move to the Novice class should they choose to do so.

SCHOLASTIC and INDEPENDENT REGIONAL A (SRA/IRA)

General Definition: This area is where the beginner will be nurtured and developed with the beginning skills and qualities as their standard. The prime purpose is to develop individual training that will assure each student's technical growth. It is also to focus on logic in program development that will allow the unit to reach high achievement. This is intended to discourage those who overwrite in an attempt to be competitive and whose excessive demand on the performers precludes their proper training and development.

Units in SRA/IRA are typically over the age of 15, or in a grade higher than 9th. Independent A age restrictions apply in the IRA classification.

Minimum Performance Time:	3.0 Minutes
Minimum Authorized Equipment Time:	3.0 Minutes
Maximum Performance Time:	4.5 Minutes
Interval between Performances:	7.0 Minutes (at least)

Judging Criteria: Winter Guard International (WGI) Regional A Class judging criteria will be used.

SCHOLASTIC AA (SAA)

General Definition: Guards in this class have students and instructors with prior winter guard experience. This class reflects an intermediate level of achievement for the MCCGA. Staff and performers will be encouraged to demonstrate logical, yet imaginative programs with achievable standards for performers. Guards in SAA should display all of the fundamental and some of the intermediate qualities of performance and design. Both students and staff have talent to grow beyond the basics and explore a higher level of design and performance technique. Students shall be challenged to perform at a higher level.

Minimum Performance Time:	4 minutes
Minimum Authorized Equipment Time:	3.5 minutes
Maximum Performance Time:	5.5 minutes
Interval between Performances:	8 minutes (at least)

Judging Criteria: Winter Guard International (WGI) A Class judging criteria will be used.

SCHOLASTIC and INDEPENDENT A (SA/IA)

General Definition: Guards in this class have at least some members with strong experience. This class reflects a high level of achievement for the MCCGA. Both staff and performers have talent that goes beyond the basics and some intermediate design



A S S O C I A T I O N

elements. Guards in this class should display all of the fundamental, many of the intermediate, and some of the advanced qualities of performance and design. A wide range of skills and physical development may exist. Occasionally a few individuals will demonstrate skills at a higher level than the ensemble.

From the WGI Rulebook: "Independent A guards can range from any starting age up to 22 years. This variance creates a difference in the look between Scholastic and Independent A guards mostly because of physical maturity and the accompanying skill level usually associated with issues of strength."

Minimum Performance Time:	4.0 Minutes
Minimum Authorized Equipment Time:	3.5 Minutes
Maximum Performance Time:	5.5 Minutes
Interval between Performances:	8.0 Minutes (at least)

Judging Criteria: Winter Guard International (WGI) A Class judging criteria will be used.

SCHOLASTIC and INDEPENDENT OPEN (SO/IO)

General Definition: Guards in this class are exploring greater levels of equipment and body skill sets in more challenging programs. Performers are expected to demonstrate a greater variety of releases, catches and more integrated use of body in combination with equipment. Designers and Instructors should be able to use the training and ability of the performer's to explore more advanced choreographic choices. Scoring in the Open class will reward vocabulary and excellence equally, thus encouraging designers and instructors to explore a broader range of vocabulary and program design.

WGI Open Class age restrictions apply to all Independent Open Units. Performers may range from any starting age to 23 years of age.

Minimum Performance Time:	4.0 Minutes
Minimum Authorized Equipment Time:	3.5 Minutes
Maximum Performance Time:	6.5 Minutes
Interval between Performances:	9.0 Minutes (at least)

Judging Criteria: Winter Guard International (WGI) Open Class judging criteria will be used.

SCHOLASTIC and INDEPENDENT WORLD (SW/IW)

General Definition: The Scholastic and Independent World Classes allow performers at the peak of training and ability to explore limitless production design and program development. It should be noted that Independent World units are expected to be comprised of members with more years of experience than what is typical of Scholastic World Performers. With this in mind, while both classes represent the height of the activity, the Independent World Units should be exploring the most elevated degree of difficulty given the maturity and age expected of an Independent World Unit. Design choices can be drawn from all possibilities as units in the World Classes should attempt to create new standards for the activity.

Minimum Performance Time:	4.0 Minutes
Minimum Authorized Equipment Time:	3.5 Minutes
Maximum Performance Time:	7.5 Minutes
Interval between Performances:	10.0 Minutes (at least)

Judging Criteria: Winter Guard International (WGI) World Class judging criteria will be used.

SENIOR CLASS (INDEPENDENT)

General Definition: Guards in this class have at least some members with strong experience. Both staff and performers have talent that goes beyond the basics and some intermediate design elements. Guards in this class should display all of the fundamental, many of the intermediate, and some of the advanced qualities of performance and design. A wide range of skills and physical development may exist. Occasionally a few individuals will demonstrate skills at a higher level than the ensemble. Performers in this class must exceed the WGI age-out limit. This class will be judged on a rating system using a panel of 3 judges. No scores will be given.