

CIRCUIT TALK

JANUARY 2026

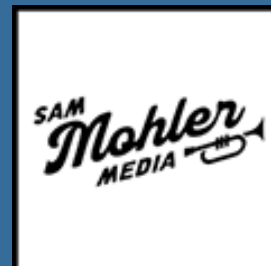
WWW.MCCGA.ORG

Announcements

1. ANY UNIT NEEDING TO MAKE A CHANGE TO THEIR SCHEDULE MUST EMAIL FESTIVALCHANGES@MCCGA.ORG.
 2. THE DEADLINE TO ADD A FESTIVAL IS 4 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE FESTIVAL DATE.
 3. TO AVOID A CANCELTION FEE, ANY UNIT NEEDING TO CANCEL AN APPEARANCE MUST ALSO DO SO NO LATER THAN 4 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE DATE OF THE FESTIVAL BY EMAILING FESTIVALCHANGES@MCCGA.ORG. CANCELATIONS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER ARE EXCLUDED FROM THIS RULE, BUT THE DIRECTOR MUST NOTIFY US BY EMAILING FESTIVALCHANGES@MCCGA.ORG AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
 4. ANY QUESTIONS SHOULD BE EMAILED TO MCCGA@MCCGA.ORG AND A BOARD MEMBER WILL RESPOND WITHIN 24 HOURS.
 5. UNITS WANTING TO PARTICIPATE IN CRITIQUE MUST SIGN UP NO LATER THAN 4 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE FESTIVAL DATES. SIGN-UP LINKS FOR EACH FESTIVAL WHERE CRITIQUE IS OFFERED ON THE WEBSITE
 6. MCCGA SCHOLARSHIP IS POSTED TO THE WEBSITE. DUE 3/2/26
- REMINDER EVERY GROUP PERFORMING AT THE CHAMPIONSHIPS CAN SUBMIT 1 APPLICATION
7. HALL OF HONOR NOMINATIONS FORM ON THE WEBSITE. DUE 2/16/26 THIS IS SUCH A SPECIAL WAY TO HONOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE MADE SUCH A DIFFERENCE IN MCCGA. PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO NOMINATE SOMEONE YOU FEEL IS DESERVING OF THIS AWARD

SEASON PHOTOGRAPHY

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE HALF-PRICE FULL-SEASON DIGITAL PACKAGES FOR YOUR ENTIRE UNIT! CONTACT BELINDA JOHNSON (BJOHNSONPHOTOGRAPHY@GMAIL.COM) OR SAM MOHLER (SMOHLERMEDIA@GMAIL.COM) ASAP TO LOCK IN DOWNLOADABLE PHOTOS FOR EVERYONE IN YOUR UNIT AT EACH PERFORMANCE! DEADLINE FOR FULL SEASON HALF-PRICE PACKAGES IS 1/31/26 (FIRST MCCGA SHOW WEEKEND). ANY OUTSTANDING INVOICES AFTER 1/31/26 WILL SIMPLY BE DELETED - YOU'RE NOT COMMITTED TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON THE PROVIDED INVOICE. AFTER THAT DATE - FULL GALLERIES MAY STILL BE PURCHASED FROM THE LINK ON EACH SCHEDULE PAGE BUT ARE NO LONGER DISCOUNTED. ANY QUESTIONS? HAPPY TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DIRECTLY!





EDUCATION CORNER

With Luke Christisen

Getting Tactical With Technique

By: Luke Christisen

The beginning stages of the indoor color guard season is an exciting time every year for all of us in the activity. Magic seems to happen when the environmental and elemental challenges that come from outdoor color guard go away, and as educators we can begin to expand our student's skill sets and vocabulary.

This early phase of the season is often hallmarked by many technique and training blocks, as well as the introduction of new and more advanced skills. While this is an easy feat to accomplish in the early season, it can sometimes prove challenging to prioritize technique and training throughout the season, when the focus and priority shifts to show construction. While show crafting is extremely important, technical proficiency and achievement is a constant expectation across all classes in the form of excellence. It can be challenging at times to fit all we want accomplished in one rehearsal session, especially in terms of technique.

In order to ensure that technique remains a staple of our rehearsal schedules all season long, here are three potential alternative approaches to a traditional lengthy technique block, that can help expedite training in rehearsal and maximize rehearsal time.

1. Choreograph technique routines to music

-Sometimes traditional technique blocks consisting of running through each exercise one after the other, can be very demanding in terms of time. One potential way to combat this is to connect all of your technique exercises together into one long "full technique megamix." This consists of starting with one exercise like drop spins and arranging it with other exercises like slams, carves etc. into one long length of phrase exercise to music that had a steady and consistent tempo. Sometimes it can help to use a 16 count transition phrase between exercises to expand vocabulary and help make moving from one exercise to the next, more natural. This approach can easily knockout technique very quickly, usually within 5-10 minutes depending on the song and can alternatively be used as a general warmup.

2. Alternate between equipment technique focused rehearsals and movement focused technique rehearsals

-Another possible alternative approach to a standard technique block is to split up your primary technical focus between rehearsal days. If your program rehearses T/Th, an example of this would be a brief movement warmup with an in-depth equipment focus on Tuesday with a brief equipment warmup and an in-depth depth movement class on Thursdays. This can help to really target each side of the judging sheets while ensuring not to neglect one side over the other.

3. Alternate technique exercises on both movement and equipment into A days and B days.

-The last alternative approach involves splitting your movement technique program and equipment technique program in half and focusing on those exercises every other rehearsal. Using our T/Th example from before this would look something like focusing on drop spins, slams and carves on an A day while focusing on pull hits, thumb flips and tosses on B days.

This approach can also help to really dig in on particular exercises that may need more development or focus while ultimately cutting down on the amount of exercises in each rehearsal.

Hopefully by utilizing one of these three listed alternative approaches to a traditional technique block, it helps your program to find new and inventive ways to make training not only more efficient but also more fun and engaging for both instructional staff and students.



MCCGA

DIRECTOR TIPS & TRICKS

with RCC & Advisory Board

BUILD A SUSTAINABLE CULTURE

THE "JANUARY-TO-APRIL" GRIND IS A MARATHON. YOUR VETERAN STATUS MEANS YOU ARE THE EMOTIONAL THERMOSTAT FOR THE ROOM.

SCHEDULE "DARK DAYS": LOOK AT YOUR CALENDAR AND INTENTIONALLY SCHEDULE A FEW WEEKENDS OR REHEARSALS OFF. YOUR STAFF AND STUDENTS NEED A "RESET" TO STAY PRODUCTIVE.

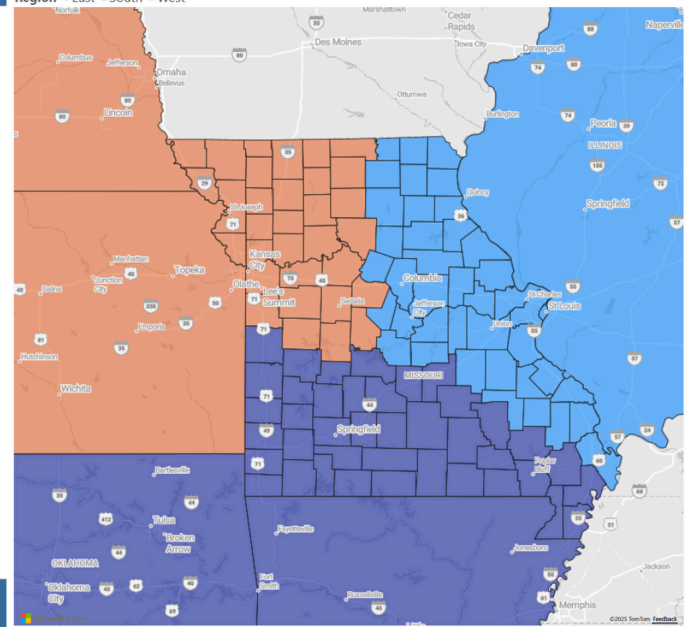
EMPOWER STUDENT LEADERS: GIVE YOUR CAPTAINS SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES (E.G., LEADING WARM-UPS, MANAGING EQUIPMENT CHECKS). IT BUILDS THEIR INVESTMENT AND LIGHTENS YOUR LOAD.

THE "CHECK-IN" RITUAL: START OR END REHEARSALS WITH A 2-MINUTE "STATE OF THE GUARD" TALK. ACKNOWLEDGING THEIR HARD WORK OR ADDRESSING A "VIBE" SHIFT EARLY CAN PREVENT MID-SEASON DRAMA.



MCCGA Regions

Region ● East ● South ● West



MID-CONTINENT

Color Guard

ASSOCIATION

2026 Championships Eligibility Performance Deadlines.

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. Each unit must also perform in at least two MCCGA festivals throughout the course of the season.

Western Region Performance Deadline: February 21st, 2026

Western half of Missouri, north of Camden County as well as all of Nebraska and Kansas.

Southern Region Performance Deadline: February 21st, 2026

Southern half of Missouri, south of Camden County as well as all of Oklahoma and Arkansas.

Eastern Region Performance Deadline: February 14th, 2026

Eastern half of Missouri, north of Camden County as well as all of Illinois.

IF YOU HAVE
QUESTIONS PLEASE
CONTACT YOUR
REGION REP

ASHLEY- SOUTHERN
SOUTH@MCCGA.ORG

JULIE- EASTERN
EAST@MCCGA.ORG

LIZ- WESTERN
WEST@MCCGA.ORG



JUDGES CORNER

with Cheryl Myers

JUDGES SHEETS

changes and reinforcements for the 2026 Season

2026 Reinforcement of Recent Changes to the Judge Sheets: Effect and Design Captions

- GE: Each sheet has added a component of Craftsmanship to acknowledge and encourage thoughtful and meaningful choices as indicators of greater programmatic/creative efforts and achievements. This then leads to a greater effect, and ultimately a greater reward.
- DA: Compositional Risk has been added to World Class sheets. Both classes have proven the ability to invent and develop compositional risks and deliver extreme challenges in skills, both overt and subtle, on the virtuosic World Class level.
- You will also see references to Safety and Compatibility. This is to prevent choreographic overreach and protect all participants.
- Programmatic Risk and Difficulty have been added to World Class sheets. Both classes have proven their ability to invent and develop programmatic risks and to deliver extreme challenges in skills, both overt and subtle, at the virtuosic World Class level.
- The inherent differences between Independent age performers vs. Scholastic age performers are reinforced through the Class Descriptors at the top of each sheet.

2026 Reinforcement of Recent Changes to the Judge Sheets: Analysis Captions

- Risk and Difficulty have been added to the Scholastic World Class sheet. Both classes have proven the ability to invent, develop, and deliver extreme challenges in skills, both overt and subtle, on the virtuosic World Class level.
- You will see references to Safety and Compatibility. This is to prevent choreographic overreach and protect all participants.
- In Excellence, for all Analysis captions, you will notice Completion of Skills being added. This is to remind judges and instructors alike that it is the finish of the skill that helps to define the skill itself as well as the achievement associated with the skill. The completion of the skill is inherent to the skill.
- The inherent differences between Independent age performers vs. Scholastic age performers are reinforced through the Class Descriptors at the top of each sheet.

2026 Items of Change

World Class Sheet Changes:

- World-class standards have been adjusted to "Advanced to Virtuosic."
- Box 6 has been eliminated on both World Class Sheets.
- Numeric ranges have been adjusted for Box 5.
- Box third delineations for Box 5 have been eliminated.

Open and World Class Qualifying Scores

- These weekly scores have been increased by 5 points, with the last regional weekend being a 65.

Region Highlights

Western Region- Blue Springs



THE BLUE SPRINGS WINTER GUARD PROGRAM HAS BEEN IN MCCGA SINCE 2012. WE EXPANDED INTO TWO TEAMS IN 2015, WHICH CREATED THE GROUP THAT TODAY IS OUR OPEN TEAM.

THIS GROUP CONSISTENTLY MEDALED AT MCCGA'S CHAMPIONSHIPS IN THE SCHOLASTIC A CLASS FROM 2015 TO OUR PROMOTION TO OPEN IN 2022. ADDITIONALLY, THIS GROUP HAS GONE TO WGI CHAMPIONSHIPS TWICE - ONCE IN 2019 WHERE WE PLACED 6TH IN THE A CLASS AND ONCE IN 2023 WHERE WE MADE SEMI-FINALS IN OPEN CLASS. THIS TEAM CONSISTENTLY HAS STUDENTS WHO ARE READY TO TRY NEW THINGS, GET BETTER, AND CONTINUE TO PUSH OUR PROGRAM TO NEW HEIGHTS - WE ARE EXCITED FOR THE SEASON AHEAD! TRADITIONS - AT CHAMPIONSHIPS, WE ALWAYS WEAR A SASH WITH BSWG AND THE YEAR, AND OUR SENIORS GET TIARA'S! IT'S A GREAT WAY TO CELEBRATE THE YEAR (AND THE JOURNEY FOR OUR SENIORS) AND BECOMES A PRIZED POSITION/KEEPSAKE FOR MEMBERS AFTER THE SEASON.

Eastern Region- Rockwood Summit



THIS SEASON IS A HUGE MILESTONE FOR THE SUMMIT COLORGUARD AS THE GROUP STEPS INTO SCHOLASTIC A FOR THE FIRST TIME AFTER RECEIVING A GOLD MEDAL IN SCHOLASTIC AA IN 2025. THE STUDENTS HAVE TAKEN ON THIS NEW CHALLENGE WITH DETERMINATION AND TEAMWORK, RAISING THE EXPECTATIONS AND PUSHING THEMSELVES TO GROW EVERY STEP OF THE WAY. WE HAVE CONTINUED ON THIS PATH OF MAKING TEAM CAMARADERIE A PRIORITY THIS SEASON AND KEEPING TRADITIONS THE SAME YEAR TO YEAR TO ENSURE THAT THE MEMBERS FEEL THE MOST SUCCESSFUL AS A TEAM. ONE OF THESE TRADITIONS INCLUDE A LOCK IN AT THE SCHOOL. THE KIDS LEARN MOST OF THE SHOW DURING THIS WEEKEND LONG CAMP, AND HAVE A SLEEP OVER BETWEEN THE DAYS WITH LOTS OF TEAM BONDING GAMES AND ACTIVITIES TO REALLY HELP SOLIDIFY THE RELATIONSHIPS FROM MEMBER TO MEMBER. WE ALSO MAKE SURE THAT THE LEADERSHIP IS STRONG AND EXACTLY RIGHT TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF EVERY MEMBER. THE MEMBERS ALWAYS HAVE A VERY CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF WHY THEY ARE HERE AND WHAT TO DO TO REACH THEIR GOALS, WHICH HELPS THE STAFF BE ABLE TO PUSH EVERYONE AND CREATE A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT TO GROW IN. THEIR COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER AND TO THE PROGRAM IS REALLY WHAT MAKES THIS TRANSITION SO SPECIAL, AND IT'S BEEN INCREDIBLE TO WATCH THEM BUILD CONFIDENCE, RESILIENCE, AND PRIDE AS A TEAM. WE ARE VERY EXCITED TO SEE HOW FAR THEY PUSH AND HOW MUCH THEY ACCOMPLISH THIS SEASON!

Region Highlights

Southern Region- Missouri State Winter Guards

THE 2026 SEASON WILL MARK THE 39TH YEAR OF WINTER GUARD AT MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY. SINCE 1987, WHEN THE FIRST WINTER GUARD BEGAN AT WHAT WAS THEN SOUTHWEST MISSOURI STATE, THE PRIDE OF MISSOURI STATE WAS JOINED BY NATIONAL AVENUE FROM MISSOURI STATE IN 1997 AND THEN 901 PERFORMANCE ENSEMBLE FROM MISSOURI STATE IN 2002. THE PRIDE OF MISSOURI STATE AND NATIONAL AVENUE ARE BOTH MULTIPLE-FINALISTS AT WGI WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS. SINCE 2021, 901 PERFORMANCE ENSEMBLE HAS BEEN A WGI VIRTUAL FINALIST. IN 2023, THE PRIDE OF MISSOURI STATE ACHIEVED THE BRONZE MEDAL IN THE INDEPENDENT OPEN CLASS AND WAS PROMOTED TO THE INDEPENDENT WORLD CLASS. IN 2025, NATIONAL AVENUE ACHIEVED 4TH PLACE IN THE INDEPENDENT A CLASS AND HAS BEEN PROMOTED TO THE INDEPENDENT OPEN CLASS IN 2026. ALSO IN 2026, ALL THREE MISSOURI STATE WINTER GUARDS WILL BE PERFORMING AT WGI WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS WITH THE PRIDE OF MISSOURI STATE IN THE INDEPENDENT WORLD CLASS, NATIONAL AVENUE IN THE INDEPENDENT OPEN CLASS, AND 901 PERFORMANCE ENSEMBLE IN THE INDEPENDENT A CLASS. ALL THREE WINTER GUARDS ARE MEMBERS OF MCCGA, WITH THE PRIDE OF MISSOURI STATE BEING ONE OF THE FOUNDING MEMBERS IN THE CIRCUIT'S INAUGURAL YEAR IN 1994. FOR THE FALL SEMESTER, ALL THREE WINTER GUARDS COMBINE TO FORM THE PRIDE COLOR GUARD, WHICH IS A SECTION OF THE 380-MEMBER MISSOURI STATE PRIDE MARCHING BAND AND HAS PERFORMED LOCALLY, REGIONALLY, NATIONALLY, AND INTERNATIONALLY IN VENUES AND EVENTS THAT INCLUDE THE TOURNAMENT OF ROSES PARADE, MACY'S THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE, LONDON NEW YEAR'S DAY PARADE, AND BANDS OF AMERICA EVENTS THAT INCLUDE REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS AND GRAND NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS.

