

A Simplified Look at the Scoring System

By Shirlee Whitcomb

The WGI scoring system credits both the performer and the designer. The close relationship between the design and the performers is quite simple. Without the design, there is nothing for the students to perform. Without the performers, the design does not exist. The blend of the two is inseparable and fully interdependent. What the students are given is their curriculum and how they do it, is their achievement. For that reason, each score sheet is divided into considerations of both what and how.

The scoring system is designed to mirror the process the designers follow in creating the color guard show. First the design team has a concept or a plan for a program. Next, they structure that plan (much like an architect would draw up plans for a building). Finally they detail the plan with the visual language of Color Guard (the equipment and movement vocabulary & role or identity of the guard). Then the training prepares the students to handle and achieve all of the elements within their show.

Five judges view the show with specialized focus. Two judges evaluate the Effect of the program. This caption embodies all components of the show such as the effect of the staging, equipment/body moments, musicality, and originality/imagination and entertainment quality. This same judge rewards the ability of the performers to communicate the program to the audience and the judge.

One judge evaluates the mechanical and artistic quality of the design of staging, equipment and body. The judge also credits the technical and expressive achievement of the performers. This individual is the Ensemble Analysis judge.

The equipment judge, measures the depth, range and variety of the equipment challenges, commonly referred to as the equipment vocabulary. At the same time, the students are credited based on the depth of their technical and expressive training and the degree of achievement of the material they are performing.

In the exact same way, the movement judge measures the depth, range and variety of the movement challenges, commonly referred to as the movement vocabulary. At the same time, the students are credited based on the depth of their technical and expressive training and the degree of achievement of the material they are performing.

The GE judges and the Ensemble judge view the program from the highest vantage point in the competition venue in order to see and credit the whole of the show. The equipment and movement judges are much closer to the performers in order to see the training and technique demonstrated by the performers.

The combination of these considerations produces a full assessment of both what the students are performing as well as how well they are achieving.