

Band / Orchestra and Solo / Ensemble Festivals Hosts'

Frequently Asked Questions

Regarding festival adjudicators and the adjudication process

With correct answers (as of August, 2011 at least)!

How do I make sure I will have judges at my festival?

The adjudicator request form is among the forms that must be submitted in the planning stages. Find it in the Festival Handbook and be sure to observe the submission timeline.

Will I have a head judge at my festival?

All Band & Orchestra festivals will be assigned a head judge. If none of the official head judges is available on your festival date, an experienced judge will be designated to serve as head judge for the day at your festival.

Solo & Ensemble festivals do not have head judges, although you may have as one of your assigned judges someone who also serves as a head judge for Band & Orchestra festivals.

When should I contact my head judge?

The host and head judge should establish contact well in advance of the festival date. The head judge is a resource for additional questions that may arise **AFTER REVIEWING** the festival handbook and this FAQ. Several weeks ahead of the festival date the host should give the head judge a close approximation of the time schedule for the festival day. A final, detailed schedule can follow closer to the event.

When should I contact the remaining judges?

At least a week prior to the festival, all judges should receive all pertinent information: schedule, directions, parking instructions, meal arrangements, etc.

The head judge is the liaison between host and judges, but it is still the host's responsibility to contact all the judges. Obviously, for Solo & Ensemble festivals there is no head judge liaison, so this direct contact is the only avenue of communication between host and judges.

What else will the head judge do?

The head judge will deliver the laptop computer used to duplicate the comment CDs, the digital recorders for judges' use and the sight-reading music. At the festival site, the head judge will continue to serve as liaison between host and judges to address any concerns that may arise. The head judge will also be the center judge who communicates with the performing directors and will be the on-site authority for any questions related to SCSBOA policies (music lists, conductor scores, performance eligibility).

Who burns the CDs?

The head judge can provide minimal on-site technical support re: burning the CDs, but it is NOT the head judge's responsibility to burn the CDs. The host must secure a competent, mature individual (i.e. an adult) to accept responsibility for using the association's computer to extract files from the digital recorders and burn them onto CDs. The computer and operator should be situated in a private area away from public access. Any concerns regarding this process should be addressed with the head judge prior to festival day.

Does the head judge check to make sure music is from the correct list and the appropriate number of selections is being performed?

It is the HOST'S job to verify before the day of the festival that each group is performing at least one selection from the proper festival music list. The easiest way to accomplish this is to ask participating directors to identify for you which selection(s) is/are from the list, and whether they used the SCSBOA or Texas list. If the adjudication sheets are completed in advance of the festival day, this can be marked on the front of the form. At many festivals the actual adjudication sheets are completed or, if sent out in advance, collected at the check-in table on festival day. If this is your procedure, the easiest way to verify the required selection is to collect titles in advance for publication in a festival program. Again, have the directors identify the required selection as they send in their titles.

Am I supposed to have a program?!

It is a very valuable "extra" to have a program available that identifies the performing ensembles and lists their selections. Many directors use the festivals as a way to learn new repertoire. The list of all titles performed at the festival serves as a resource – a recommended list for future reference. The program can be lavish and sold as a fundraiser, or a simple photocopied sheet prepared the day before the festival. Both serve the purpose.

How many selections SHOULD each group perform?

Ensembles performing for a rating in class B, C, D and E must perform three selections, of which at least one must be from the appropriate music list. Ensembles performing in class A or AA must perform ONLY TWO selections, at least one of which is from the A or AA list. Groups in lower classes that perform as their required selection something from the A or AA list must also perform ONLY TWO selections.

It is the HOST'S responsibility to clarify this with directors whose submitted program does not conform to the requirements.

Sometimes a group performing in class B or C will choose as a "free" or "non-list" selection a work that would realistically be considered an A selection if on the music list. In this case, total performance time must be considered and held to approximately twenty minutes. This is the kind of situation the head judge may have to monitor and adjust time between selections to keep the festival on schedule.

How should I schedule the performances?

Band & Orchestra performances are scheduled in 30-minute blocks. A 15-minute break after four or five performances is optional. Do not leave a full 30-minute block open unless a group cancels after the schedule is finalized. In this case the group should have already submitted the entry fee (don't include groups in the final schedule that have not paid!) and the judges will be paid as if there was a performance. Meal breaks range from 30-60 minutes depending on the meal arrangements (check the meal question!).

Solo & Ensemble performances are generally scheduled five per hour, either in 12-minute slots, or 10-minute slots with an open slot each hour. Larger ensembles should be given more time (they pay a higher entry fee for this reason) to allow additional time entering and leaving the performance venue.

How many groups do I schedule per day?

There is quite a bit of variation in length of day between festivals. A few of the largest events have so many entries two sets of judges are used each day, enabling twenty-five or more groups to perform in a single day. Most festivals will schedule 12-16 groups per day. Judges must be paid for a minimum of eight groups, so that should be considered the minimum number of paid entries for a festival to be financially sound. A single set of judges will seldom judge more than twenty groups in a day.

So, what about the meals?

The festival host is required to provide breaks for lunch and/or dinner at appropriate times in the schedule. The host is not technically required to provide the meal. However, if the host does not provide a meal, adequate time must be allowed for judges to leave the site, eat and return and hosts should direct the judges to nearby, good places to eat.

Almost all hosts provide the meal for the judges, both as a courtesy and to facilitate staying on schedule. Meal details vary between festivals: a burger from the snack bar, the faculty cafeteria, hospitality room ala field tournaments, orders from nearby fast food, or full dinners.

The amount of time allotted in the schedule for the meal will range, as indicated, from 30-60 minutes. Factors to consider are overall length of the event, whether the meal is provided on site, and the nature of the meal. Keep in mind that sight-reading judges work thirty minutes behind the others, so their meal time will be later, and they may be eating alone if the meal time is just 30 minutes.

Does the host provide snacks for the judges?

Yes, the host should provide light snacks and beverages for judges as they work. The cost of these snack items can be included for reimbursement on the expense report.

What do the judges expect of the host on festival day?

In addition to creating the schedule and offering provision for meals, the host is expected to provide direction signs and guides to clarify procedures for all participants. The judges expect student or parent runners/aides to deliver and collect music scores, adjudication sheets, and recorders. The check-in workers should verify that adjudication sheets are completed fully, especially checking instrumentation on the second page and the indication whether a group is playing for rating or criticism only. Any photocopied music scores should be accompanied by a letter of permission from publisher or music store. Leave the permission letters attached to the scores. Do not remove them at the check-in table. Perhaps most important, the head judge must know how to communicate with the host if necessary during the festival.

The festival host is also responsible for providing six fresh AAA batteries each day (or shift if using a double judging crew) for the digital recorders used by the judges.

How do I record and post the ratings?

Use the ratings computation chart found in the festival handbook to determine the overall rating. Post only the overall rating, but record each individual judge's rating on the festival recap sheet. If a group receives a "split rating" – i.e. I-II-III or II-III-IV – bring all three adjudication sheets to the attention of the head judge before returning them to the director. Not always, but in most cases one of the judges will adjust his/her rating to eliminate potentially confusing feedback. Note that this never changes the overall rating! An "Excellent" I-II-III is still "Excellent" if it is changed to I-II-II or II-II-III, but students and directors receive more consistent feedback on the performance.

How are ratings determined at regional festival?

Final overall ratings at regional Band & Orchestra festival result from combining the rating earned on stage with the sight-reading rating. The ratings computation chart for regional festivals can be found on page 7 of the Festival Host Handbook, August 2011 revision.

Who gets the recap?

Following the festival the final recap is sent to the SCSBOA office and the VP-Festival Adjudication, per instructions on the forms. However, if possible the host should also make copies at the end of each day to give to each judge.